THE LATIN SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN CULTURE

FROM

GREGORY THE GREAT

TO

CHARLES THE GREAT

Some aspects of the influence of the
Gregorian Papacy on the development
of Western Christianity: AD 590-814

A Thesis

by

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PREFACE

The thesis which follows is an attempt to reassess the position of Pope St. Gregory the Great in the history of Western Christendom. I have not attempted to deal biographically with Gregory except insofar as such treatment is required to interpret his work. For the biography of Gregory, the reader is referred to the competent works of F.H. Dudden and Msgr. Battifol. I have been unable to deal with the important questions raised by Gregory's theological statements, although the matter of his sources and the nature of his influence (especially for the doctrines of Purgatory and of Atonement) merit further study. Since Gregory is the central figure of this study, I have only been able to suggest here such channels of later influence as seem to me obvious in the light of my interpretation of the Latin spirit and of the sixth century Pope; a more thorough reinterpretation of the seventh and eighth centuries is obviously needed. Gregory's incidental influence on penitential practice in the next two centuries has not been touched, although I think it a profitable new area for study. It has also been necessary to ignore the influence of such persons as Isidore of Seville on England and on Carolingian Gaul.

This work represents, I realize, a considerable departure from the usual approach to St. Gregory, though since the condemnations of Gregory by Harnack and his contemporaries the

way has been prepared for a more appreciative treatment. The author would be the first to admit that the negative aspects of Gregory's personality and his reign have been slighted. But until we have come to accept the 'Dark Ages' as a period with some inherent values and understand those values, we are in no position to criticize its deficiencies. Indeed, we need a thorough reexamination of the Christian cultural dynamic, for, despite the recent recognition of its importance for all of European history, a great number of the discussions of that dynamic have been naive and superficial.

A word is needed concerning the annotation. Notes have been abbreviated as much as possible. The name of the author and the title of the work with the date of the edition used are given in the first citation of any modern study in a given chapter. Citations of Gregory's works, with one exception, refer to the Latin text of Migne's _Patrologia_. The text used for the Epistles is the exception: it is that of Ewald and Hartmann, _M.G.H._ _Epp._ I-II. Other ancient texts are usually cited by book or chapter and section; information concerning the text used is to be found in the Bibliography. The Bibliography has full information concerning all works used, including the original date of publication for books I have consulted in more recent inexpensive editions.

I cannot conclude without some acknowledgement of the debt I owe for assistance in preparing this thesis to several persons. The Reverend Lloyd G. Patterson, Ph.D., my tutor,

has patiently and judiciously guided a novice through the processes of research and writing. Without his insight--especially regarding the Latin patristic period--and his encouragement, this paper could not have been produced. The Reverend Professor William J. Wolf and my associates in the Honors Program have heard several of these chapters during our weekly meetings and have offered important suggestions. Miss Elisabeth Hodges, Librarian at the Episcopal Theological School, has been very helpful in making available the necessary sources. Finally, my wife has helped immeasurably in the preparation of the manuscript.

M.M.G.

Cambridge, Massachusetts
Saint Philip and Saint James, Apostles, 1960

ABBREVIATIONS

M.G.H.	Monumenta Germaniae Historia.
Epp.	M.G.H. Epistolarum.
Poet.	M.G.H. Poetae Latini Medii Aevi.
P.L.	J.-P. Migne, ed. Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina.
P.N.F.	P. Schaff & H. Wace, eds. A Select Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers: Second Series.
Alcuin, Epp.	Alcuini sive Albini, Epistolae. M.G.H. Epp.IV.
Boniface, Epp.	S. Bonifacii et Lulli, Epistolae. M.G.H. Epp. III.
Dial.	Gregorii I, Dialogorum Libri IV de Vita et Miraculis Patrum Italicorum et de Aeternitate Animarum. P.L. LXXVII, 149-430, & P.L. LXVI, 125-214.
Epp.	Gregorii I Papae, Registrum Epistolarum. M.G.H. Epp. I-II.
Greg. Tours, Hist. Franc.	Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks (transl. Dalton).
H. E.	Venaberalis Baedae, Historiam Ecclesiasticam Gentis Anglorum (ed. Plummer).
Hom. in Evang.	Gregorii I, Homiliarum in Evangelia Libri Duo. P.L. LXXVI, 1075-1312.
Hom. in Ezech.	Gregorii I, Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam Libri Duo. P.L. LXXVI, 785-1073.
Moral. In Job	Gregorii I, Moralium Libri, sive Expositio in Librum B. Job. P.L. LXXV, 509 - LXXVI, 782.
Reg. Past.	Gregorii I, Regulae Pastoralis Liber. P.L. LXXVII, 13-128.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH AND WESTERN EUROPE IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

It is the purpose of the essays which follow to examine certain aspects of the thought, policy, and activity of St. Gregory the Great in their historical setting and, by way of conclusion, to assess the influence of this late sixth century pontificate on the development of the Western or Latin catholic tradition to the time of Charles the Great. Before we turn to this task, however, we must first say something about the historical setting of the Gregorian pontificate--about the status of Western society after the 'fall' of the Western Empire, about the political and ecclesiastical and cultural conditions of the sixth century.

It is generally conceded today that Gibbon's term, 'fall', for the disappearance of the Western half of the Romano-Byzantine Empire is, to say the least, misleading. Although the event was marked by a profound cultural shock, as St. Jerome, St. Augustine and their successors attest, the disappearance of the Imperial structure was so gradual as almost to be unnoticed by the inhabitants of Italy and Gaul. They regarded themselves still as citizens of Rome; and their 'conquerors' the barbarians consciously modeled society along Imperial lines, even acknowledging in varying degrees the superiority of Imperial sovereignty. It is, therefore, not strictly accurate to say that Rome fell after the first barbarian invasions of the fifth century, was briefly

recovered by Justinian, and lost again. One should state, rather, that the Roman state underwent a long period of decline which set in shortly after the reforms of Augustus and which did not end until the Islamic conquest closed the Mediterranean, made great territorial inroads and finally forced an end to the, by then almost legendary, existence of a Western Empire. The situation of what was once called the Dark Ages was, then, in a broad way not unlike our own: it was evident that this was a period of vast cultural adjustment and change, that an old order was passing. Yet, like ourselves, sixth century men were unaware what direction history was to take and, being unable to foresee, oriented their thought and their policy about the passing order.

The late Professor Pirenne of Ghent was the first to establish the thesis outlined above, working largely from political and economic data; it has been adopted with variations by most of his successors. Pirenne summarizes the situation of the sixth through the eighth centuries by stating that,

> Considering matters as they actually were, we see that the great novelty of the epoch was a political fact: in the Occident a plurality of states had replaced the unity of the Roman state. And this, of course, was a very considerable novelty. The aspect of Europe was changing, but the fundamental character of its life remained the same. These states, which have been described as national States, were not really national at all, but were merely fragments of the great unity which they had replaced.[1]

Two political events, one in Gaul and one in Italy, did much

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1. Mohammed & Charlemagne (1925), 140. See also F. Lot, The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages (1931), 403-407.

to determine the course of Western history in the sixth and following centuries and are, more importantly, the controlling factors of the political situation faced by St. Gregory: the conquests and the baptism of Frank Clovis, and the invasion of Italy by the Lombards. Before the time of Clovis, the barbarians had largely been assimilated into Gallo-Roman society, and had maintained Roman institutions so as to minimize the cultural shock of the changing orders. The Germanic peoples quickly dropped their indigenous political and social institutions, adopting those of their Roman neighbors; thus there continued in Gaul into the fifth century a vigorous, though decadent, Roman culture.[2] Only the Arianism of the Goths distinguished them from the prevailing cultural milieu.

The Frankish irruption on the scene effected significant, although not violent, changes. Clovis' defeat of the Roman general Syagrius in 486 marked the end of the Roman state in Gaul and the first significant invasion of a (presumably) non-Federated Germanic people. But, in assessing this fact, the observer must note at the same time that Clovis' invasion caused no violent social upheaval, that it was evidently welcomed by the Gallo-Romans, and that the Merovingian king quickly established himself at Soissons and in other Roman centers. His court was peopled by Latin-speaking advisers, the Germanic law was codified in imitation of Latin codes, the fisc was modeled after the

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2. See S. Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire (1958), passim.

Imperial original, and the king took evident pride in the consul-
ship granted him by Anastasius from Constantinople.[3]

The most significant event of Clovis' reign in the light of
subsequent history--and it too, is evidence of the attraction
of the Frank to things classical--was his conversion and baptism
at Rheims in 496. Gregory of Tours' reminiscence of some hesitancy
on the king's part probably accurately represents the reluctance
of some of the Franks to discard their old practices, but the
inertia was not great. A century later the Gallo-Roman bishop
and historian regards the baptism of the first Merovingian monarch
as an event comparable to the conversion of Constantine.[4] Clovis
was now the only barbarian Catholic, a fact which made his claim
to sovereignty over the old Roman order all the more appealing
and which expedited the defeat of all Gothic sovereignty in Gaul.
The sincerity of his profession and his political motivation are
elements of the event not ascertainable; it suffices that the
Germanic chieftan was in a position now to claim the allegiance
of whatever remained of Roman culture and society. Clovis'
successors, though even ruder than himself, maintained the same
alliance with the old culture and the Church. Though they par-

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3. Greg. Tour., Hist. Franc., II. 38; Pirenne, A History
of Europe (1955) 30-38; Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, 33.
Lot, End of the Ancient World, 317ff., denies that the Franks
were ever Romanized--an assertion for which much can be said;
but he is forced to admit that the political transition was
easily effected with no alterations of the social and economic
status of the Gallo-Romans.

4. Greg. Tour., Hist. Franc., II. 31.

titioned and fought over their territories, they continued to regard France as a single political unit.

An event of less universal significance but of parallel importance for Italian history and for the pontificate of St. Gregory the Great is the Lombard invasion of Italy. Justinian (527-565) had set the stage for this incursion by his reconquest of Italy as part of his ambitious and magnificent, yet romantic and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to reclaim the Augustan Empire.[5] Justinian's successors, their full energies required to maintain the status quo in the Orient against the Persians, were unable to support the Exarch of Ravenna in retaining Justinian's conquest. A vacuum was thus created South of the Alps, opening the way for conquest in 575 by the comparatively small Lombard tribe, themselves driven West by forces migrating from Russia.[6] These Arian tribesmen, who remained for some time unromanized, were officially adversaries of the Empire and effected that political division of Italy which lasted to the nineteenth century risorgimento.

The Lombard and the Frankish states were the western political realities with which St. Gregory had to deal at his accession in A.D. 590. Ferdinand Lot has noted that there were two possibilities open to Western society after the fall of the Latin half of the Empire: recovery of the Empire or the establishment of a Germano-Roman modus vivendi.[7] Justinian had tried the former

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5. A. A. Vasiliev, History of the Byzantine Empire (1958), 192.

6. Pirenne, History of Europe, 44.

7. End of the Ancient World, 403.

course and had failed; faced with two strong barbarian states, the Church would now attempt the latter solution.

Having seen something of the political condition of Western Europe we must now consider the position of the Church and of the Papacy in the latter part of the sixth century. It is generally conceded that the strongest surviving remnant of the old order was the Church, which, as Dr. Dawson has pointed out, was the most significant vehicle of continuity in the age of transition, and about which the new order was ultimately to orient itself.[8] Yet the very conditions which had occasioned political separation of the halves of the Empire and which tended to fragment the Western segment were at work on the Ecclesiastical organization. Although it seems that the decisively operative factor in the East-West division of the Church was intellectual and cultural--we shall have more to say of this later--the creation of two centers of Christianity, as of Empire, tended to draw apart the whole exactly as the Empire had been split. But the Church retained in the Bishop of Rome a Western center.

The Papacy itself had suffered greatly at the hands of Justinian and from the aftermath of the affair of the Three Chapters. Coming as it did on the heels of the ephemeral triumph of Leonine Christology, Justinian's successful assertion of

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8. See Medieval Essays (1954) and Religion and the Rise of Western Culture (1950). Pirenne, History of Europe. 59, holds that it was not because the Church was Christian, but because it was Roman, that it was able to maintain so strong a position in Western society.

authority over the Church was a severe blow to the prestige of the Roman Bishop. Not only was Pope Silvester deposed by the general Belisarius, but also his successor Vigilius, nominated by Theodora, was held captive in Constantinople and forced to adjust his theology to the Imperial policy.[9] In the dispute over the Three Chapters, the African, the Illyrican, and the North Italian Churches had supported the original Roman position. In Africa, enforcement of the canons of condemnation of the Council of Constantinople led to the deposition of the Metropolitan of Carthage and to the imprisonment or martyrdom of a number of clergy. Opposition had led to the banishment of the Bishop of Salona in Illyricum, and an extensive popular discontent lingered there. In Italy, Vigilius' successors had been opposed to the anathema of Constantinople, but Pelagius I, who had convinced himself that Chalcedon had in no way been betrayed, met such opposition at his accession that he could only make peace by issuing a confession strongly supporting Chalcedon and not mentioning Constantinople.[1] In 590, the wounds were not yet healed; schism was continued in certain areas of Italy and Papal adherence to Constantinople still bred mistrust of the Petrine See. The controversy over the Three Chapters is important more

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9. H. St. L. B. Moss, The Birth of the Middle Ages (1937), 114ff; P. de Labriolle, G. Bardy, L. Bréhier, G. de Plinval, De la Mort de Théodose à l'élection de Grégoire le Grand (1948), 257ff.

1. Labriolle, Bardy, et al., De la Mort de Théodose, 477ff.

for its symbolic value as an indication of East-West tension and
of the Western tendency to fragmentation than for real theological
importance.

The Papal position in the controversy of the Three Chapters
is also symbolic of the Papal position in general at the end of
the sixth century. Most studies of the development of Papal
authority and doctrine are concerned more with documentary evidence
of Papal assertions and their acknowledgement or denial from other
quarters, than with the historic reality of Papal prestige as it
was successfully or unsuccessfully asserted. Mere reading and
exegesis of the documents can lead to the conclusion that the
Papacy had developed steadily until, at the time of Gregory I,
the stage was fully set for the Gregorian assertions and almost
ready for the Hildebrandine claims. But, as a matter of political
reality, there was not much substance behind the claims. The fact
that Rome was the only Western Apostolic See and Patriarchate
lent great prestige in the West, but there was little or no
tradition of effective control of the Churches in Spain, Gaul,
Illyricum, or even of the Italian peninsula. The myth of Roman
evangelization of the West has probably clouded the facts more
than anything else. African Christianity, theologically and
evangelically, had actually been the creative center of the Latin
Church. The first Gallican Churches were of Greek source. Latin
Churches in Gaul, all of which date from after 250 had looked in
the fifth century as much to Africa as to Rome for leadership.
Pope Zosimus' attempt to gain control of the Gallican Church by

establishing the Vicarate at Arles had been neither popular nor successful; and even in the late sixth century there is some indication in the <u>History</u> of Gregory of Tours that the normal traffic between Gaul and Constantinople was via Carthage and not via Rome.[2] Until after 590, Spain was largely Arian and had little contact with Rome. Illyricum seems to have been ecclesiastically controlled by Constantinople by the sixth century, although Theodosius had given patriarchal authority to Rome. The Laurentian Schism of <u>ca</u>. 500, as well as the Three Chapters controversy, indicates that Italy was far from ready to acknowledge unlimited papal suzerainty in the West.[3] The scarcity of evidence of successful assertions of patriarchal authority and the political fragmentation of the West, which broke down control of adminis-tration even in the Churches, lead to the inevitable conclusion that the prestige of the See of old Rome was in a precarious position, if, indeed, it had not been virtually dissipated by the time of the Lombard invasion.

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2. <u>Hist</u>. <u>Franc</u>. X. 2.

3. Although the interpretation of the status of Western primatial tradition is mine, the general historical facts to which allusion is made can be verified by reference to J. Lebreton and J. Zeiller, <u>The History of the Primitive Church</u>, Vol. II (1947); and to Labriolle, Bardy, <u>et al</u>., <u>De la Mort de Théodose</u>. The classic study of African Christianity is E. Buonaiuti, <u>Il Christianesimo Nell' Africa Romana</u> (1928). Other works helpful in substantiating this thesis are W. H. Frere, <u>The Anaphora</u> (1938), Chaps. XII-XVI; and P. de Labriolle, <u>Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne</u>, 2 Vols. (3rd Edn. Rev. by G. Bardy, 1947).

There were in the Church, however, forces which tended to draw and to hold Latin Christianity together--which, in the same way as barbarian fragmentation of the Empire was retarded by the myth of unity and by the attraction of tne remnants of classical culture, tended toward some sort of ecclesiastical unity. Not the least of these was the identification of the idea of catholicism with the idea of Empire. We have already seen that the Arianism of the Gothic nations tended to draw together Romans and catholic barbarians as against a threat to the true faith. Already the Franks were interested actively in the conversion of Reccared in Spain, and the assistance of the Merovingians against the Lombards had been enlisted by the Bishop of Rome and the Emperor.

The fact that the Church maintained the diocesan structure after it was politically defunct and assumed some of the activities--notably charitable--of the civil authorities tended to tie the Church as a whole to the old order and to the welfare of the people. The ability of the Church to carry on these tasks was, of course, directly dependent upon its wealth. So its holdings in real property, the Patrimonies, were of great importance, as even the barbarian kings had to admit. In assuming municipal government and diocesan structure and by its charitable works, the Church, in whatever locality, made its bishops the chief personages of local society. Thus it can correctly be said that "On a small scale the part of a Leo or Gregory was played by most

of the bishops of the countries overrun by Teutonic invaders.[4]
Among these bishops there was often communication and consider-
able rapport, but, with the rise of local political pressures,
the way of even a local primacy was greatly impeded.

The great sixth century monastic movement was a powerful
unifying force, capable of mobilizing the Latin-speaking Churches
by unifying them in a great cause against the evils of the world.
The very conditions of the age were forcing men to espouse the
monastic discipline. We will devote a later essay to the history
of this movement.

At the accession of Gregory I, then, the condition of
Christianity was almost as chaotic as that of the Empire. Rome's
prestige was insignificant as a political reality and there was
little common purpose among or within the several provincial
areas of Christendom. But, just as the idea of the Empire tended
to give the Old Roman world an illusion of continuity, so the
identification of the Church with Roman culture tended to identify
it with the old order. The very continuation of the Church made
it a _de facto_ symbol of Roman continuity in the midst of violent
change.

I have said parenthetically above that the real division of
the Church, East and West, was an intellectual and cultural
phenomenon before it was a political fact. This assertion has

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4. F. W. Kellett, _Pope Gregory the Great and his Relations with Gaul_ (1889), 5.

now to be examined in some detail both as background for the nature
and motivation of Gregorian policy and as background for the
general religious atmosphere which we will be considering below.
To say that this ideological division existed is to say that the
cultural unity of the Hellenistic world was more a figment of the
political imagination than a reality. Eastern, or Greek, thought
was based on a Platonic or Middle-Platonic world view which rested
on a dualistic metaphysic, and denied the ultimate importance of
the physical and the historical. Its goal was to find in the
spiritual realm escape to communion with the λόγος.

Roman thought and religion before the Empire had been con-
cerned with historical reality and individual moral responsibility,
and had not made the fundamental Greek distinction between mind
and matter, or spirit and world. This Roman Weltanschauung had
thus a closer affinity with the Jewish than with the Greek.
While an attempt was made in the late Republic and the early
Empire to Hellenize Latin thought, it did not produce a thorough-
going transformation. The Hellenist movement in Latin letters,
which probably never spread beyond an intellectual elite, pro-
duced the despair of meaninglessness of Catullus and Lucretius.
From this despair, the historical destiny envisioned by Virgil
and Augustus rescued Latin thought, giving it a sense of meaning,
of destiny, of the responsibility of the individual within the
cultural-political framework. That this distinction of Latin
and Greek thought forms existed was not recognized at the time;
so Latin thought could assume Platonic dualism, but transform it

by making the battle of physical evil and spiritual good a very real and moral battle fought, and won or lost, on the stage of history and event.

The Church in the Latin areas adopted this variant metaphysic with considerable ease since it was closer to the realistic Biblical world view, but it did not make the adjustment consciously. Like their pagan neighbors, Christians were unaware of the violence they did the Greek sources. In theology, as in philosophy, Greek sources are to be found for almost every development, but invariably this same subtle but significant transformation occurs. So it is proper to say that, not only were the Church and the Empire politically divided, but also that the Greek and Latin traditions stood in metaphysical juxtaposition to each other.

The division can be documented if we set in juxtaposition Eastern and Western statements about monastic ideals and motivations, about the relation of the Church and the State, and about history and salvation.

Asceticism in the West transformed the aim of the Eastern ascetics. The Athanasian Life of St. Anthony demonstrates clearly that the aim of Greek monasticism was to escape from the evil-physical realm to communion with the Godhead; from the physical world and its temptations, the Egyptian solitary retreats to seek the purely eternal realm. St. Basil of Caesarea codified Eastern monastic ideals and stated their motivation:

Man was made after the image and likeness of
God; but sin marred the beauty of the image by
dragging the soul down to passionate desires. Now
God, who made man, is the true life. Therefore,
when man lost his likeness to God, he lost his par-
ticipation in the true life; separated and estranged
from God as he is, it is impossible for him to enjoy
the blessedness of the divine life. Let us return,
then, to the grace /which was ours/ in the beginning
and from which we have alienated ourselves by sin,
and let us again adorn ourselves with the beauty of
God's image, being made like to our Creator through
the quieting of our passions. He who, to the best
of his ability, copies within himself the tranquility
of the divine nature attains to a likeness with the
very soul of God; and, being made like to God in
the manner aforesaid, he also achieves in full a
semblance of the divine life and abides continually
in unending blessedness.[5]

Man's fall was a descent from the spiritual to the physical;

blessedness is the recapture of the imago Dei by means of a

rigorous education of denial.

The Latin Church was at first resistant to monasticism.

Jerome's experiences in Rome recall (and a glimpse at an atlas

will demonstrate) the reaction to the movement of that end of

the Empire in which the sense of morality and of duty in and to

the world was at the core of the psychological dynamic. Indeed,

even in Jerome, the movement is reformed. No longer does one

leave the world to escape its intrinsic evil, but because it is

so pervaded by evil that alone in its midst one cannot conquer:

I want to show you that you had better not be
left to your own discretion, but should rather
live in a monastery under the control of one
father with many companions. From one of them
you may learn humility, from another patience;
this one will teach you silence, that one meek-
ness. . . You will be so busy with all these
tasks that you will have no time for vain

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5. From an exhortation in Ancient Christian Writers, IX, 207.

> imaginings, and while you pass from one occu-
> pation to the next you will only have in mind
> the work that you are being forced to do.[6]

In the world one cannot control himself; in monastic seclusion
his work leaves him no time to sin.

The life by Sulpicious Severus of the great Gallo-Roman
ascetic saint, Martin of Tours, is the counterpart of the Life of
St. Anthony. It is not the story of mortification in the desert
but of denial of self to do good works in and for society. In
this temper the ascetic movement was able to flood through the
West.

The West's attitude to the Church and State problem after
the events of the first quarter of the fourth century also
differed markedly from that of the East. Caesaropapism was not
a phenomenon of development in the East; it occurred with the
conversion of the god-Emperor and was immediately enshrined in
the rite and practice of the Constantinopolitan court. One need
only recall the arrangement of figures of the Emperor and his
household about the Christos Pantocrator in the mosaics of Ravenna
to suspect that the Eastern court regarded itself as an earthly
manifestation of the court of the heavenly King. Although the
Church occasionally spoke out against the pretensions of the
crown, notably in the person of St. John Chrysostom, its efforts
were usually silenced with little or no difficulty. In the
appointment of patriarchs, in his presidency at the councils, in

6. St. Jerome, Ep. CXXV.

the laws making heresy a civil crime, in the myth of his person,
the Emperor possessed sufficient power to rule as absolute 'Vice-
roy of the Almighty'.[7]

Not so in the West. The image of David was evoked again and
again as the Latin Fathers expounded the role of the king or
emperor as the minister of Christ, protecting the Church yet sub-
ject to its censure for his moral and spiritual failures. St.
Ambrose is unusually outspoken, but he is the most outspoken only
because of the strategic position of his See. Theodosius to him
is but a man subject to sin who must conquer his rebellious will
and do penance for his misdeeds as any other.[8] If the Emperor
has fiscal advisers to help formulate and implement financial
policy, how much the more should he heed the advice of his bishops
in the vastly more important realm of imperial morality?[9] In
the dispute with Symmachus over the restoration of the altar of
Victory to the Senate, Ambrose goes to the root of the problem
of Church and State: Rome's greatness depends not upon her pagan
tradition but upon the work of her citizens and, thus, upon their
moral and religious integrity. Rome has progressed like the
seasons from the seedtime of paganism to the maturity of Christ,
and stands ready for the harvest of souls.[1]

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7. S. Runciman, Byzantine Civilization (1958), 35. On the
court ritual, see Moss, Birth of the Middle Ages, 79f. For the
attitude of individual Emperors, see Vasiliev, History of the
Byzantine Empire.

8. Epp. LI, XL.

9. Ep. XL.

1. Ep. XVIII.

Finally, while Eastern dualism led theology to deny the
importance of the struggle of man in and with history by setting
salvation outside time--that is, in eternity, whence the saved
escape time which is the locus of sin--the West was able by
internalizing sin to come to grips with the problem of history.
In Africa, Latin theology came to its own, grasping as early as
Tertullian the problem of sin as one of the conversion of the
will, of the conquering of man's own evil inclinations. Sin for
St. Augustine is, "not fundamentally ignorance resulting from
fleshly passion, but a knowing misuse and corruption of both
soul and flesh. /Hence/ time can be contrasted with eternity
without conceiving either to be unique loci of sin or sinlessness
(infinite progress)."[2] Under the impetus of the cultural crisis
of the first half of the fifth century, Augustine dealt with
history and providence by analogy with the internal struggle of
the individual soul with sin: the race created able not to sin
(posse non peccare) fell into bondage of will (non posse non
peccare): in Christ, man is able again not to sin, but at the
last he will be unable to sin (non posse peccare).[3] History
is the stage on which is acted out the universal struggle of
man with his will, and on which God enables man to achieve vic-
tory by the free gift of himself in Christ.

Augustine stands at the head of a short-lived succession
of theologians grappling with the problem of history in the

2. Brooks Otis, "Cappadocian Thought as a Coherent System,"
Dumbarton Oaks Papers. XII (1958), 121.

3. De Civitate Dei. XXII, 30.

light of the fifth century crisis. Though he was not fully
understood by these followers, their Latinity was sufficiently
ingrained for them to see that history was determined by the
success or failure of man in the battle with his own will. So
Orosius sees history as man's sin and God's retribution which
reproves "in a spirit of strict justice."[4] St. Salvian recog-
nizes the barbarians, like the enemies of Israel, as instruments
of the God of history for the chastisement of his people.[5]

There is, then, in the Latin theological tradition, a sense
of the duty and destiny of the individual within the historic
Church which is quite apart from the tradition of the Greek
Church. The Latin tradition springs from the pre-Imperial Roman
religious and cultural sense of that same individual destiny
within the historic Roman society. It adapts but transforms the
dualism of the East, making the effort of the spirit to escape
from the physical in order to unite with the ideal a battle of
the individual with historic evil in order that the religio-
political order may achieve its destiny. At every turn, the
Western tradition is nourished by the theology of the East, but
invariably it reinterprets what it borrows in terms of the Roman
outlook.[6]

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4. Adversus Paganos, I, 1.

5. De Gubernatione Dei. III, 9; VII, 21-23.

6. P. Sherrard, in The Greek East and the Latin West (1959),
sees something of the distinction between East and West, but
traces it to the 'exteriorization' or formalization of the basic
pre-suppositions of a unified Mediterranean culture. It is

Having said something about the Latin weltanschauung, we must comment briefly on the sixth century Weltbild. Historians and theologians, looking at the period from the standpoint of the twentieth century 'scientific' world picture, universally deplore the 'superstition' and credulousness of the period, taking particular offense at the veneration of relics, the cult of the saints and of the Virgin, and the proliferation of miracles. It is uncontestably true that in the sixth century, Western culture underwent a significant and severe barbarization. The danger is that these elements are often seen as part of the Christian Weltanschauung of that age and not simply its super-structure, its mythologization. These elements have classical antecedents in Augustine, in Origen, in asceticism, in alle-gorical exegesis. They are heightened in the sixth century, and the phenomenon is part of the general barbarization of classical culture. The historian must be as careful to distin-guish between myth and idea as is the twentieth century Biblical

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illuminating in getting at the sources of the peculiarly Latin outlook to read a treatment of Roman religion such as that of R. H. Barrow, The Romans, Chap. VII; or, far better, F. Altheim, A History of Roman Religion (1938). Altheim traces the history of the peculiarly Roman religious concept of history controlled by divine guidance in submission to which the individual finds his fulfillment, and shows how throughout its history this con-cept transformed foreign assimilations. Note the striking similarity to later Christian Roman ideas of the concepts of numen (pp. 192-199), and of the superiority of Rome as lying in Roman piety, attentiveness to the Gods, and perception of the purpose of the Gods for Rome in history (p. 428. Altheim con-cludes, "By submitting to the Gods they became masters of the world;" if the 'Gods' were 'God' the statement could charac-terize almost any Latin theologian.)

exegete. It is quite possible that behind the picture lies a
Christian outlook quite as consistent with the Gospel as our
own--or more so. It cannot be condemned or dismissed as false
and decadent simply because its language and symbolism are
repugnant to our own age. It is amusing that the twentieth cen-
tury cult of relevance with its agonizing search for adequate
symbols has not been able to accept the fact that other eras had,
similarly, to use the language of the time.

Some pains have been taken to set the stage politically,
ecclesiastically and culturally for a consideration of St.
Gregory the Great. In the essays which follow, we will consider
topically instead of biographically certain aspects of his pon-
tificate and consider his position in the history of the
Merovingian and Carolingian periods. It is the general thesis
of the paper that, while Gregory I seemed able by virtue of his
tremendous personal appeal and authority to draw together the
Church for a moment, his success in his own lifetime was only
limited and, after his death, a succession of weak Popes lost
even more prestige than Gregory had regained. But, ironically,
certain of Gregory's work--notably the propagation of the Bene-
dictine rule so as to make monastics throughout the West intensely
loyal to Rome and the establishment of a Latin center in England--
was ultimately to make possible the recapture and enhancement
of Roman authority at the instigation not of the Popes them-
selves but of the Gregorian foundations of the North-West.

Hence while Gregory's work apparently failed, it was able to triumph, and to set the tone of medieval monasticism, personal piety, and theology and to determine the structure of tne papacy and of the doctrine of the Church. The driving force behind this achievement of Gregory was his Latin sense of responsibility and destiny which the condition of his world tended to intensify. Gregory was the last great Roman, and he was tne Roman who transmitted to the Middle Ages the dynamic of Western Christianity.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH AND THE PAPACY

Papal prestige in A.D. 590 was at a dangerously low ebb.
The western political situation and the preoccupation of
Byzantium with its own problems tended to dissipate any Occi-
dental cohesion. The city of Rome, depopulated, ruined, ravaged
by the plague, threatened by Lombard armies, was little more
than a provincial village surviving among the monuments of a
once great city.[1] Only the memory of Rome and the survival of
the idea of _Imperium_ supported whatever remained of Roman
ecclesiastical authority.

More than ever the prestige of the Papacy depended upon
the personal ability and authority of the incumbent. Gregory
might regard Leo the Great as the ideal Pope, but he had to
remember that the constitution of the _Imperium_ had so changed
as to make it impossible to rule as Leo had ruled.[2] Gregory
might admire the work of Pelagius II, his friend and predecessor,
but Pelagius had died of the plague,[3] dread symbol of the ills
of Rome and of the violently changing order. The Pope who
ascended the chair of Peter in 590 had to shape a new order on
his own authority; he could not rely upon the precedents of

1. F. Gregorovius, _History of the City of Rome in the
Middle Ages_ (1902), II, 1-29.

2. T. Jalland, _The Church and the Papacy_ (1949), 303.

3. Greg. Tours, _Hist_. _Franc_. X. 1.

the old. What better image for the beginning of such a pontificate

than a great penitential procession, the Bishop urging his flock

to repent and to prepare for the coming Judge, while several of

the congregation fell dead of the plague?[4]

In the following essay, we shall consider various aspects

of the doctrine of Church and Papacy in the writings of Gregory

the Great and assess their application to this changing world

order. It will be sufficient if, rather than considering

exhaustively his relations with other Churches and their bishops,

we discuss only a sampling of his contacts. First, we should

deal with the doctrine of the Church ennunciated by Gregory and

with his view of the pastorate. Then we can consider his exer-

cise of the Roman pastorate and assess the importance of that

work.

There is in the writings of Gregory the Great no developed

or systematic doctrine of the Church. Attempts have been made

to systematize his occasional statements with regard to the

nature of the Church,[5] but they have largely failed because the

Gregorian doctrine is better deduced from the tone of the Corpus

as a whole than from isolated dogmatic statements. While we

must attempt a brief systematization of his doctrine, we will

find it more satisfactorily exposed in the events of his

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4. Ibid.

5. See F. H. Dudden, St. Gregory the Great (1905), II, 405-
414; R. Seeberg, History of Doctrines (1958), II, 25; H. Howorth,
Gregory the Great (1912), 294-297.

episcopate.

One of the most remarkable and most suggestive statements
of the doctrine of the Church occurs in the Pope's reply to the
accession letter of Isacius, Bishop of Jerusalem.[6] Gregory
allegorizes the Noachian saga to arrive at the 'truth' expressed
for the Church in the 'history' of the ark:

> Servata veritate historiae quid est aliud, quod
> diluvii tempore humanum genus extra arcam moritur,
> ad vitam vero in arca servatur, nisi hoc, quod aperte
> nunc cernimus, quia infideles quosque extra ecclesiam
> peccate sui unda peremit et fideles suos in fide atque
> caritate sanctae ecclesiae unitas quasi arcae compago
> custodet? Quae arca videlicet de imputribilibus
> lignis compingitur, quia de animabus fortibus atque
> in bono suo perseverantibus aedificatur; et cum a
> saeculari vita unusquisque convertitur, quasi adhuc
> ligna de montibus succiduntur; cum vero ad sanctae
> ecclesiae ordinem ad aliorum custodiam deducitur,
> quasi de excisis atque compositis lignis ad servandam
> vitam hominum arca aedificatur. Quae profecto arca
> cessante diluvio in monte requievit, quia huius vitae
> corruptione cessante, cum malorum operum fluctus
> transierint, in caelesti patria sancta ecclesia
> velut in excelso monte requiescit.

The three essential elements of Gregory's ecclesiastical
doctrine are succinctly expressed in this allegorical exegesis:
(1) the Church is the sole vessel of salvation; (2) the unity
of the Church consists in the orthodoxy of the faithful which
is both symbolized and maintained by the episcopate; (3) the
Church is the Kingdom which exists in and against the world to
prepare for the coming Judgment. These are the elements which
are consistently maintained and restated by Gregory in his
writings.

The image of the ark is evoked several times to demonstrate

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6. Epp. XI. 28.

Gregory's conviction that the Church is the sole and the adequate vessel of salvation.[7] Like the ark the Church embraces both the clean and the unclean, the elect and the damned; but, like the ark, she alone brings the faithful to their Mount Ararat.[8] Good works and tears of penitence--the primary imperatives of Christian life--avail nothing to him who is not in communion with the Catholic Church.[9]

Gregory insists that Church unity consists of the adherence of its several members to orthodox teaching. This means not alone embracing the Church's faith but following the faith in a life of good works. In a letter to churchmen in Constantinople, Gregory upbraids them for teaching that Christ, when he descended into Hell, delivered only those who accepted him as Saviour. Since the Incarnation the life of faith has been a necessary adjunct of acceptance of the faith, it is specious to presume that less was required of our forefathers than of ourselves.[1]

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7. Hom. in Ezech. II. 4. 16f.; I. 8. 28; Hom. in Evang. II. 38. 7f.

8. Moral. in Job, XXXV. viii. 13.

9. "Sicut enim rami sine virtute radicis arefiunt, ita opera quamlibet bona videantur nulla sunt, si a soliditate fidei disiunguntur." Epp. IV. 33. See also Epp. IV. 4.

1. "Si ergo fideles nunc sine bonis operibus non salvantur et infideles ac reprobi sine bona actione Domino ad inferos descendente salvati sunt, melior illorum sors fuit qui incarnationem Domini minime viderunt, quam hi qui post incarnationis eius mysterium nati sunt." Epp. VII. 15. Although he is not often this outspoken theologically, Gregory usually allows one to infer that he considers good works and right faith equal requirements for salvation. He usually covers himself, as in

Orthodox faith is defined by the Gospels and by the canons of the

five Councils: these are the foundations of the structure of faith

and must be received as such.[2] The present custodians of the true

faith are the bishops, "quos indesinenter in loco praedicatorum

praecidentium divina dispensatio subrogat."[3] The mutual love

and mutual duty of the several bishops, despite the variant uses

and customs which are tolerated, knits together the Church. They

work in unison to teach right doctrine; they suffer for each

other and rejoice for each other.[4]

The most important element in the ecclesiology of Gregory

is the eschatological. Most historians have seen this element

as a formalism[5] or as naive millenarianism.[6] Actually, the

impending Judgment is to St. Gregory the sanction for works, the

reason for action, the inner dynamic of the Church's life and

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the same letter, with an ambiguous sentence of Augustinian sound:
"quia descendens ad infernos Dominus illos solummodo ab inferni
claustris eripuit, quos viventes in carne per suam gratiam in
fide et bona operatione salvavit."

2. Epp. I. 24. Note that Gregory separates the first four
Councils from the fifth, thus associating himself to the tradi-
tional Western caution in dealing with the Three Chapters.

3. Moral. in Job. IV. 31. 61; Epp. V. 44.

4. Epp.. V. 47; I. VI, 58. The idea, in letters to other
bishops, that their mutual concerns unite them in spirit is so
frequent that it becomes almost a formula.

5. F. Dudden, Greg. the Great. II, 430, sees the eschatology
as an Augustinianism, firmly believed, but he fails to see its
pervasive importance.

6. P. Batiffol, Saint Gregory the Great (1929), 65, 287f.

being. Over and over again there appears the image of the world
as a stormy sea on which the Church, a frail ship tossed cruelly
by the waves, is guided by the bishop, the helmsman, to the safety
of the port.[7] This is not to say that the Church militant is not
in some sense the present token of life after the coming Judgment,
but that the Church which is Christ's present Kingdom for the
just yearns for the attainment of its goal: "Regnum ergo coelorum
est Ecclesia justorum, quia dum eorum corda in terra nil ambiunt,
per hoc quod ad superna suspirant, jam in eis Dominus quasi in
coelestibus regnant."[8]

It is in the imminent hour of Judgment that the goal will
be realized. The present condition of the Roman world and the
state of the city of Rome are signs of the last days; these are
the signs, the pestilences, the wars, the tumults, the famines
predicted in the Gospel.[9] The individual has not to put his
trust in this life and this world--they are all but dissipated--
but in the world that comes.[1] Beholding the signs, the Christian
is forced to act, to prepare himself for Judgment and to attempt
to prepare others for their salvation.[2] The individual, cleric

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7. Epp. I. 4, 41, etc. The image in this form is more per-
sonal than, but intimately related to, the ark images noted above.
The storm is the deluge, but the deluge as it presently assaults
the individual bishop in his ship.

8. Hom. in Evang. II. 38. 2; II. 32. 6; Moral. in Job.
XXXIII. 18. 34.

9. Hom. in Evang. I. 1; the text is Lk. 21: 25-32.

1. Moral. in Job, XV. 3. 3; Dial. III. 38.

2. "Ecce enim mundum hunc quam vicinus finis urguet
aspicitis; quod modo in nos humanus, modo divinus gladius saeviat

or lay, must act in and for the Church, so that by vigilant per-
formance of this duty he will have acquitted himself of his
obligations when he meets the Judge and will be found righteous.[3]

If there is a persistent theme in the work of Gregory, it is
the eschatological. Gregory believed as surely as the first
Christians that the stresses of his own age portended the coming,
cataclysmic Judgment of God. It was this faith which aroused
and supported his thoroughly Latin sense of duty. One must teach
as the fathers taught, work as they worked, repent as they re-
pented so that the Church's mission and destiny might be fulfilled,
for only in that fulfillment is the destiny of the individual
achieved. As Virgil thought that the individual's salvation lay
in his unstinting self-identification with the purposes and aims
of the Augustan Imperium, so Gregory knew that the individual's
salvation lay in absolute adherence to the faith and teaching of
the Catholic Church and in sacrificial dedication of all one's
energies to the work of the Church. Thus was one prepared to
present himself before the Judge, whose coming the travails of

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videtis. Et tamen vos veri Dei cultores a commissis vobis
lapides adorari conspicitis et tacetis? Quid quaeso in
tremendo iudicio dicturi estis, quando hostes Dei et sub
potestate vestra suscepistis, et tamen eos Deo subdere atque
ad eum revocare contemnitis?" Epp.. IV, 28.

3. "Ita ergo fac, ut et nostram iussionem impleas, et tu
quoque hoc ipsum bene disponendo hac ipsa possis participari
mercede." Epp.. I. 18. There is such an exhortation in almost
every letter.

the age surely portended.[4]

    It is no great wonder, then, that Gregory set high standards

for the life and work of the bishops. The concept of the Church

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    4. Something must be said here about the relation of St.
Gregory's theological position to that of St. Augustine of Hippo.
It is commonly asserted that Gregory relies directly upon the
theology of Augustine but that he distorts the doctrine of the
latter. So Dudden, Gregory the Great, II, 405, states that
Gregory adopts Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology; and, at
p. 430, holds that he is in agreement with the African on
eschatology. Seeberg, History of Doctrines, II, 26f., states
more accurately that comparison of the theology of the two
Doctors leads to a "remarkable result. Almost everything in
Gregory has its roots in the teaching of Augustine, and yet
scarcely anything is really Augustinian."

    Seeberg, with A. Harnack (Outlines of the History of Dogma
/1957/, 387), attributes the alteration to the supremacy in
Gregory of superstition: "The controlling motive is not the
peace of the heart which finds rest in God; but the fear of
uncertainty, which seeks to attain security through the institu-
tions of the Church." (Seeberg, II, 26). Both are incorrect,
for the superstitious elements in Gregory are part of his world
picture and are not the sanction for his theology. As with
Augustine--as in most Latin theology--the supreme sanction is
the God of history whose righteous will judges the individual
by his ~~the~~ devoted service in the Church to the goal of history.

    Granted that the technical language and much of the concep-
tualization of Gregory are prefigured by Augustine, one must
yet ask whether Gregory knew his predecessor's work thoroughly.
R. Gillet in his Introduction to the Moralia in Job (Sources
Chrétiennes, Vol. 32, 1950) shows that Gregory is perhaps more
dependent upon Cassian, Ambrose and others than on the Bishop
of Hippo (pp. 82ff). Before any conclusion as to the sources
of Gregory I can be made a great deal of textual study is needed.
There is a connection with Augustine, but it is not so direct
and so important as is often assumed. Gregory's knowledge of
the latter's works is almost certainly confined to a few of the
controversial treatises and sermons; surely Gregory does not
know the De Civitate Dei. (Moral. in Job. XXV. 8. 21, though it
uses 'City of God' does not require knowledge of Augustine's
text).

    It would be better to say that Gregory's theological back-
ground is that of the Latin West. His reading was general but
limited. Despite striking parallels of vocabulary ne does not
appear to have relied literally or exclusively upon Augustine.
The more important sources seem to have been ascetic.

and his understanding of his historical _Sitz_ _im_ _Leben_ combined to
make the life of the bishop a hard one in Gregory's eyes. It is
not surprising that he should think himself unworthy of the task
and that he should seek to avoid it;[5] it is, at the same time,
not surprising that once he had accepted the task he devoted
himself to his work with extraordinary zeal and commitment.

The _Liber_ _Regula_ _Pastoralis,_ begun by Gregory shortly after
his election, was completed during the first months of the pon-
tificate. It is a guidebook for bishops, but in a more important
sense it was an exercise of self-discipline to outline his own
duties as the Roman bishop, as the chief pastor, in the years
ahead.[6] It is unfortunate that many biographers have failed to
see that, just as eschatology is always the operative sanction
for Gregory's action, so the source of his tactics is almost
invariably his Rule for pastors. In the same sense that _regulae_
monachorum governed the lives of the religious, the _Regula_
Pastoralis governed the Gregorian episcopate.

The volume gives directions for the personal life of the

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5. _Epp_. I. 3-6, etc.; _Reg_. _Past_. I. _Praef_.: Greg. Tours,
Hist. _Franc_. X. 1.

6. " . . . quae ne quisbusdam levia esse videantur,
praesentis libri stylo exprimo de eorum gravedine omne quod
penso, ut et haec qui vacat, incaute non expetat, et qui incaute
expetiit, adeptum se esse pertimescat." _Reg_. _Past_. I. _Praef_.
John Chrysostom had also written a treatise in defense of his
attempt to evade elevation to the episcapacy (H. Davis, Intro.
to _Reg_. _Past_. transl. _Ancient_ _Christian_ _Writers,_ Vol. II, 4).
Gregory's principle source, according to Fr. Davis, is Gregory
of Nazianzus' _Discourses,_ II. which existed in a Latin trans-
lation by Rufinus. (_Ibid_., 12ff).

pastor and for the execution of his teaching ministry. It opens
with a description of the pastor's task and its personal require-
ments; it concludes with an exhortation to penitence and humility.
The care of souls is 'the art of arts'. Yet in his day Gregory
finds that--though knowing nothing of medicine they would not
dare to pose as 'physicians of the flesh'--many who are ignorant
of the spiritual life profess to be 'physicians of the heart'.[7]

A rigorous asceticism and a profound humility must charac-
terize him who accepts the pastorate. He who undertakes
unworthily to rule does so at the risk of his own peril.[8] Those
who are worthy and yet flee from duty out of humility risk dis-
placing their humility with pride.[9] The life of the rector must
be exemplary; he must be discrete, humble and compassionate.[1]
He must, especially since he has no human rector, be diligent in
his spiritual life, showing his doctrine by his works.[2] He must
be prudent and patient in reprimanding his subjects; sometimes he

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7. Reg. Past. I. 1. The physician image occurs in Greg.
Naz. and in John Cassian (c.f. Gillet, Intro, Moral. in Job,
Sources Chrétiennes, vol. 32, 89ff.)

8. Reg. Past. I. 11.

9. Reg. Past. I. 6. "Neque enim vere humilis est, qui
superni nutus arbitrium ut debeat praeesse intelligit, et tamen
praeesse contemnit. Sed divinis dispositionibus subditus, atque
a vitio obstinationis alienus, cum sibi regiminis culmen imperatur,
si jam donis praeventus est, quibus et aliis prosit, et ex corde
debet fugere, et invitus obedire."

1. Ibid., II. 1-6.

2. Ibid., II. 7.

will even overtly overlook their glaring faults while waiting for the opportune time to bring them to penitence.[3] Above all the rector is <u>Servus Servorum Dei</u>. He is to 'lord it over vices and not his brethren.'[4]

The teaching function of the pastor is, to judge by the sheer weight of the third part of the <u>Regula Pastoralis</u>, the most important and the most difficult. If Gregory's directions for teaching and admonition are casuistical to an extreme, it is not because he desires to reduce the art of arts to a science. The careful and elaborate exposition of types of admonition simply reflects Gregory's concern that the pastor's teaching fit the individual to whom it is addressed.[5] The principle role of the bishop is the correction of his subjects so that they may be prepared for judgment. Finally, the <u>rector</u> must turn back to himself in penance for his own sins so that he will not fall into pride by reason of his exalted position.[6]

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3. <u>Ibid</u>., II. 10.

4. "Summus itaque locus bene regitur, cum is qui praeest, vitiis potius quam fratribus dominatur." <u>Reg</u>. <u>Past</u>. II. 6. The title <u>Servus Servorum Dei</u> is Gregory's style for himself in many of the <u>Epp</u>.; c.f. <u>Epp</u>. I. 1. etc.

5. <u>Reg</u>. <u>Past</u>. III. 1. The concern for the individual's character within the larger framework in which that individual moves and finds his fulfillment is typically Latin.

6. "Quia et plerumque omnipotens Deus idcirco Rectorum mentes quamvis ex magna parte perficit, imperfectas tamen ex parva aliqua parte derelinquit; ut cum miris virtutibus rutilant, imperfectionis suae taedio tabescant, et nequaquam dese magnis erigant, dum adhuc contra minima innitentes laborant; sed quia extrema non valent vincere, de praecipuis actibus non audeant superbire." <u>Reg</u>. <u>Past</u>. IV.

The bishop is chief pastor whose every move is motivated by
the desire to fulfill his duty, the duty of preparing souls in
righteousness. He must, above all, be a man whose personal
witness to the truth he teaches is exemplary for its purity and
its humility. It is this idealized concept of episcopal work
which was the guidebook for the rule of Gregory the Great as
Bishop of Rome.

In his relations with the Churches of the East, Gregory's
concern was simply that all of Christendom be reformed so as to
fulfill the demand of righteousness and purity inherent in the
Gospel. He may have asserted the Papal prerogatives very
strongly--more strongly perhaps than most of his predecessors--
but he did so only because he saw himself as chief pastor. His
sanctions were always the necessity and urgency imposed by the
age, and the evangelical concepts of righteousness and judgment.
One must be prepared to account for his life to the Judge; the
pastor-bishop's duty is to exercise his oversight so that his
flock is thus prepared.

The dispute of Gregory with John IV, the Faster, Patriarch
of Constantinople, is illustrative of this primary concern. John
had assumed the title πατριάρχα οἰκυμενικός at a Constantin-
opolitan synod of 588. Pelagius II had objected to the title[7]

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7. Jalland, Church and Papacy, 355, 315. Jalland notes
that the title should have been rendered imperialis in Latin;
it was, however, faultily rendered universalis. He assumes
the West would not have objected to the title had it been
correctly translated. This seems a specious argument: Gregory
and Pelagius would have objected as well to a claim of Imperial
primacy.

and Gregory continued the protest when the offense was repeated
by John and by his successor Cyriacus.[8] Gregory's anger is
aroused not because the title poses a threat to his own primacy--
that is secure in the Petrine tradition[9]--but because it goes
against the very nature of episcopate in the Church. If the
Patriarch of Constantinople is universal bishop, Gregory says in
one encyclical, then other bishops are not bishops at all. The
nature of the Church universal is that there is one Church com-
posed of many churches under their bishops; if one bishop claims
to be the universal bishop, then the leaders of the other churches
are not bishops at all: "Nam si unus, ut putat, universalis est,
restat ut vos episcopi non sitis."[1] Grace is poured out on the
Churches in common by Christ who is the head of the universal
Church. The bishops are the heads of particular communities
under one head. If one bishop usurps the common authority so as
to claim to be the sole channel of grace, the unity of the Church
will be broken, for the other bishops will not tolerate the

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8. The Epp. germane to this controversy are V. 37, 39, 40,
44, 45; VI. 58; VII. 5, 24, 28, 30, 37; VIII. 29; IX. 140, 156,
175; XII. 16; XIII. 38, 42, 43.

9. Epp. V. 42; VI. 58; VII. 37. These are the letters which
raise the curious claim that Antioch and Alexandria are peculiarly
bound to Rome by virtue of their common attachment to Peter. The
claim, which fails to win the Patriarch, seems to have been put
forward in an effort to win support against Constantinople.

1. Epp. IX, 156. This same argument is implied in many of
the epp. ~~others~~. Often it is combined with the threat that, if
John persists, the position of Constantinople will precipate
schism.

destruction of the very nature of their office.[2] The See of Peter
had been offered a similar honor in the past, and had refused
because the pontiffs realized that they would thereby deprive the
other bishops of their due.[3]

Not only does the Faster attack the very nature of the Church.
Ironically, this noted ascetic has sunk deep into pride thus
threatening his own salvation. He is unable to fill his pastoral
office as teacher and exemplar so long as he persists in his own
sin.[4] Constantinople proclaims its own perdition in this heinous
display of pride.

The most scandalous aspect of the affair, however, is that
the Patriarch's pride shows him as none other than Antichrist.
The Barbarians have overrun Europe; idolatry again flourishes;
heresy is rife; the priests who ought to be weeping and in ashes,
seek only new and vain styles.[5] The end approaches and the Church
participates in the scandals of the last days: ". . . in hac eius
superbia quid aliud nisi propinqua iam Antichristi esse tempora

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2. "Perpende, rogo, quia in hac praesumptione temeraria pax
totius turbatur ecclesiae et gratiae contradicitur communiter
omnibus effusae." Epp. V. 44.

3. "Certe pro beati Petri apostolorum principis honore per
venerandam Chalcedonensem synodum Romano pontifici oblatum est.
Sed nullus eorum umquam hoc singularitatis nomine uti consensit,
ne, dum privatum aliquid daretur uni, honore debito sacerdotes
privarentur universi." Epp. V. 37. Gregory's history is not
strictly accurate.

4. Epp. V. 44, etc. This theme is implicit in all the Epp.
dealing with the οἰκυμενικἰς dispute.

5. Epp. V. 37.

designatur?"[6] The Church must purify itself to face the return
of its Lord and Judge.

In the dispute over the 'proud title', then, more is at
stake than the primacy of Rome. It is the last time and the
Church is found impure. She must purify herself by making certain
that the historic dimension of unity in a plural episcopate is
not dissipated. The bishops must be true pastors, not debilitated
by their own sins.

In the dispute, the primacy of the Petrine See is assumed
again and again.[7] The primary authority asserted is that of
pastoral oversight: Totius ecclesia cura et principatus is the
phrase used to describe the authority of Peter in the same breath
in which the Constantinopolitan title is lamented.[8] What Gregory
claims is difficult for us to understand since we think in the
context of more recent Papal claims. He is, and he sees no
paradox or contradiction in the situation, one bishop among many
and, yet, the first bishop. This does not mean that he can legis-
late for the whole Church or rule each diocese; it means that he
is the highest appellate authority and, as such, responsible for
maintaining the purity of the several particular communities and
for protecting their rights. In the end, Constantinople retained
the title, and Gregory's successors within a century had assumed

6. Epp. V. 39. See also VII. 30; IX. 156.

7. See, for example, Epp. V. 37, 39, 44.

8. Epp. V. 37.

a similar one.[9]

This same concern of Gregory's can be verified by reference
to the several cases in which he asserted his appellate juris-
diction against the other Patriarchs. The most striking of
these are the cases of the presbyters John of Chalcedon and
Athanasius of Isauria. John had been tried and condemned in
Constantinople for heresy, despite his protests of orthodoxy.
He came to Rome where Gregory reheard the case and sent him home
with letters ordering reinstatement. A man's confession of
orthodoxy must, if it is in orthodox form be accepted, Gregory
ruled, otherwise every man's orthodoxy is put to the test.[1]
Athanasius had been found with an heretical book, condemned of
heresy, and flogged in St. Sophia. Gregory accepted his condem-
nation of the heresy of the volume and his confession of ortho-
doxy, and ordered his reinstatement at his monastery.[2] It is
not clear whether Cyriacus, who succeeded John at this juncture,
upheld the Gregorian judgments.[3]

His dealings with other Eastern churches are of a piece with
those outlined above. Although he did not test his power in
seeking the restoration of Anastasius to the patriarchate in
Antioch, Gregory's unceasing interest in the case must have had

9. Dudden, Gregory the Great, II. 223f.

1. Epp. VI. 14, 17; III. 52; V. 44; VII. 5.

2. Epp. VI. 62; III. 52.

3. Dudden, Gregory the Great, II. 209.

some influence in the former's restoration when the See fell
vacant.[4] He corresponded frequently with Eulogius of Alexandria,[5]
but had only a formal acquaintance with Isacius of Jerusalem.[6]

Despite the eloquence and the brazenness of Gregory's asser-
tion of primacy against the East, it is unlikely that he was able
to further the cause of Rome in any appreciable way. The fact
that he made himself heard probably only helped maintain the
status quo ante of Rome vis à vis the other Patriarchs. They
were not allowed to forget his existence. But Gregory did not
succeed in instituting the reforms he considered necessary if
the Church was to be prepared in righteousness. He had not the
power to enforce his claims. He was, as it were, a prophet in
the wilderness to the West--distant, heard, unheeded.

The same kind of pastoral primacy in the face of the last
days was asserted by Gregory in the West with approximately the
same effect. Yet a different tone can be detected in Gregory's
letters to Western churches. Curiously it is more cautious and
guarded, less presumptious and insistant. It reflects the fact
that Papal primacy in the West had never been a significant his-
torical reality. His effort, which can be contrasted with the
attempt in regard to the East to maintain Rome's position, was
to bring the Western church to rely on Rome as the motherly

4. Epp. I. 24, 25, 27; V. 42.

5. Epp. V. 58; VII. 31, 37.

6. Epp. XI. 28.

elder Church eager to perfect her brood and to strengthen their
affection for her.

This attitude is best seen in the first letters to Africa.
Although he wrote the Exarch of Africa and the Bishops of Numidia
to assure them that their local privileges--notably the election
of the senior provincial bishop as primate, so long as no former
Donatist secured the post--will be maintained, Gregory makes it
clear that he is adjudicating a matter already referred to
Pelagius II.[7] He is careful not to address himself to Dominicus
of Carthage or to Columbus in Numidia until he is first addressed
by them. He chides Dominicus gently for not having sooner acknow-
ledged his elevation, reminding him that charity must always
unite the bishops. Rome will always protect the ancient African
local privileges, but she must, he implies, do so by overseeing
the purity of the local Church.[8]

The lack of Papal influence in Africa is further attested
by his tactics in attempting to deal with the remnants of
Donatism in Numidia. The Donatist Church, which seems to have
survived the Vandal conquest and the Roman reconquest and to

7. Epp. I. 75, 59, 72, 73. On the organization of the pro-
vincial Churches in Africa see Dudden, Gregory the Great, I.
418f.

8. "De ecclesiasticis vero privilegiis quod vestra frater-
nitas scribit, hoc postposita dubitatione teneat. Quis sicut
nostra defendimus, ita singulis quibusque ecclesiis sua iura
servamus. Nec cuilibet favente gratia ultra quam meretur
impertior, nec ulli hoc quod sui iuris est ambitu stimulante
derogabo. Sed fratres meos honorare per omnia cupio, sicque
studeo honore singulos subvehi, dummodo non sit quod alteri
iure ab altero possit opponi." Epp. II. 52.

have been alarmingly strong at the end of the sixth century, had
to be crushed. But the African catholics winked at the schis-
matics and, proud of their independence, were not favorably dis-
posed to Papal efforts to institute reforms. Except for Columbus,
who seems to have been personally loyal to Gregory, they ignored
his exhortations. The Pope had ultimately to turn to the secular
arm to enforce Imperial laws proscribing Donatism.[9]

In the case of the bishop Paul which arose from the African's
zeal against Donatism, Gregory was unable to secure sufficient
cooperation from Africa in obtaining evidence. Unable to take
jurisdiction of the case, he had to refer Paul to Columbus for
trial.[1] In the case of Crementius of Byzacius, although ordered
to take cognisance by the Emperor, Gregory was again unable to
proceed. Finally although clearly indicating he considers his
jurisdiction legal, he delegated the case to Crementius' synod.[2]
So too, in other cases he is forced to allow local adjudication.

Gregory was forced, in his dealings with the African Church,
to concede at every turn. He made his case known, but almost
invariably he was unheeded. The isolation of Africa and the
presence there of an Exarch directly responsible to Constantinople
did not help his case, but the primary factor in the situation

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9. The most important Epp. dealing with the Donatist affair
are I. 72, 73, 75, 82; II. 46, 52; III. 47, 48; IV. 7, 32, 35;
V. 3; VI. 34, 61.

1. Epp. IV. 32, 35; VI. 59, 61; VII. 2; VIII. 13, 15.

2. Epp. IX. 24, 27; XII. 12.

was the strong tradition of home rule. The African was not the only such Church in the West.

The Church in Istria refused to recognize the Council of Constantinople, and was not in communion with Rome. Most of Gregory's communication with the province was by way of Constantinople and Ravenna. He was forced by the Emperor and the Exarch to desist from attempting to secure the return of the Istrians to orthodoxy.[3] Illyricum was within his sphere of influence--though the Church there felt the pull of Constantinople as well as Rome[4]--and Gregory engaged in notable conflicts with some of the bishops there.

The Metropolitans of Dalmatia, the bishops of Salona, were notably in need of correction. Natalis, who held the See at Gregory's accession, was a lax prelate who contrived to put his rigorist archdeacon Honoratus out of the way by elevating him to the priesthood. Gregory's attempts to adjudicate their dispute were frustrated by the death of the bishop.[5] The election of a successor precipitated a bitter struggle between Gregory's and Natalis' parties. The latter elected and consecrated, despite papal nomination of Honoratus, one Maximus without papal approval. Although Gregory was unable to bring Maximus to trial in Rome for celebrating the Mass while excommunicate, he was

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3. Dudden, Gregory the Great. I. 446ff; Epp. II. 45.

4. See Chap. I.

5. Epp. I. 19; II. 20, 21, 23, 50; III. 32.

ultimately able to force the bishop of Salona to do penance in
Ravenna. Maximus was recognized and sent the pallium.[6] The
affair, thanks to the insistence of the Pope, ended in Gregory's
favor. In general, he was able to hold his own in Illyricum,
though he was forced to take severe action and, ultimately, to
compromise in such a way that he only appeared to have won the
day.

Gregory's contact with Visigothic Spain was limited. He
had known Leander of Seville at Constantinople and wrote him
occasionally. He rejoiced in the conversion from Arianism of
Reccared and his people; he gave Leander advice on adjustment
of the nation to its new faith; he sent the pallium and copies
of the Regula Pastoralis and the Moralia in Job. But he made
no particular claim of authority for himself.[7]

The letters to Ravenna and Milan again illustrate the
strength of Western episcopal independence. The long dispute
with the bishops of Ravenna over the use of the pallium is com-
parable in some respects to the dispute with John the Faster.
It is not surprising that John of Ravenna should have asserted
himself against Gregory, but it is unusual that his successor,
Marinianus, sometime monk at Gregory's house in Rome, should
have continued the controversy. The bishops of Ravenna stood

6. Epp. III. 22, 46; IV. 16, 20, 38; V. 6, 29, 39; VI. 3,
25, 26, 46; VII. 17; VIII. 11, 36; IX. 149, 155, 158, 177, 176,
237; X. 15.

7. Epp. I. 41; V. 53; IX. 227, 227a /authenticity ques-
tioned/, 228.

on the ground of ancient local custom; Gregory was primarily con-
cerned that they not jeopardize their pastorate by a display of
pride. Gregory was horrified at any liturgical novelty which
had not some tradition to support it--for by departing from
custom the bishops sought to glorify themselves.[8] He was finally
checked by the assertion of Ravenna that it adhered piously to
the traditions of its fathers.[9] This question, as so many others,
was never resolved.[1] Although Gregory was fond of John, to whom
the Regula Pastoralis is dedicated, and of Marinianus, he had
frequently to assert Rome's claim to authority and to reprimand
their sloth.[2]

Close relations with the Milanese successors of Ambrose,
were impeded by the Lombard control of the area and by the mis-
trust of many north Italian Christians of Rome in the light of
the Three Chapters Controversy. But the political situation
also made the bishops of Milan--living in exile at Genoa--more
receptive of papal solicitude. The Election of Constantius in
592 to succeed Laurentius gave Gregory the opportunity to exert
some influence in ascertaining that the candidate was accept-
able to the clergy in exile and to those yet resident in Milan.

8. Epp. V. 15.

9. Epp. III. 66.

1. Epp. IX. 167. Other letters in this series are III. 54,
67; V. 11, 24, 51, 61; VI. 31.

2. Gregory's affection for Marinianus and his concern over
his laxity can be seen in Epp. VI. 28, 63; VII. 40; IX. 188; XI.
21.

His interest was purely pastoral; he did not derrogate in any way the right of the Milanese to elect their own pastor. They had to be certain, however, that their new bishop was a fit man to prepare their Church for the divine Judgment.[3] In 600, Gregory supported the Milanese election of Deusdedit as next bishop against the nomination proposed by the Lombard, King Agilulf.[4] Constantius seems to have been happy to receive Gregory's support in defending the orthodoxy of the Fifth Council to the schismatics and to the Lombard Queen, Theodelinda,[5] but he was not so happy to receive his suggestions in matters liturgical and disciplinary.[6]

Gregory's relations with the Sardinian Church are interesting. The metropolitan Bishop of Cagliari, Januarius, was a singularly inept person. The Church was undisciplined and in disorder, paganism in the island went unchecked, synods were not held; the clergy and people were so dissatisfied with their bishop-- and Januarius was so weak--that Gregory was able to take an active part in the reform of the Church. In his letters to Januarius, he was stern one moment and the next expressed loving concern for the spiritual welfare of this weak ruler.[7]

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3. _Epp._ III. 29, 30, 31; IV. 1.

4. _Epp._ XL. 6, 14.

5. _Epp._ IV. 2, 3, 4, 33, 37.

6. _Epp._ IV. 37; V. 18.

7. _Epp._ II. 47; III. 36; IV. 9, 23-27, 29; V. 2; IX. 1, 11, 202-204; XIV. 2.

Although this has by no means been an exhaustive survey of Gregory's relations with Western Churches, it is a sufficient sampling of the kinds of situation he met. Always in the West there was resentment of his claim of supreme pastoral jurisdiction. Even bishops who were his personal friends were jealous of the privileges of their peculiar churches. Only where the bishop was weak could the Pope effectually carry out reforms. But Gregory's conception of the role of the Roman See and of the role of the bishop in the life of the Church forced him to make known his claims and to acquit himself of his duty to set before the world the claims of the coming Judge and Saviour.

One last Church the Gallican, must, finally, be considered briefly. Papal communication with Gaul had been severely impeded, if not absolutely arrested, by the disappearance of the last official vestiges of Imperial administration at the time of the Frankisn conquest. Hence Gregory the Great's resumption of communication with the Church under the Merovingians is extremely significant.

In the year of his accession, Gregory received and replied to letters of congratulation from Virgilius of Arles and Theodorus of Marseilles.[8] He interceded in behalf of the Jews who, as we know also from the bishop-historian of Tours,[9] were more

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8. Epp. I. 45. It cannot be shown that Gregory had officially informed the Franks of his consecration. The news was probably taken back by a pilgrim, as in Greg. Tours, Hist. Franc. X. 1.

9. Greg. Tours, Hist. Franc. VI. 10 (17).

often baptized by force than by conversion, urging that they be persuaded by preaching.

Except for one letter to the rector of the Patrimony in Gaul,[1] this is, curiously, the only surviving correspondence until 595, the year of the οἰκουμενικός controversy and the year before the English mission. It was a symbolic coincidence that Gregory, trying in vain to reform the old order, turned at the same instant to the reform of the Church in the new order. The initiative in this renewal of Franco-papal relations was, however, taken by the Bishop of Arles and King Childebert of Austiasia and Burgundy who asked that Arles be given the pallium.[2] It was not until he had obliged the Frankish Church by bestowal of this favor that Gregory felt free to attempt any assertion of pastoral authority.

Gregory's work in Gaul is in four areas: (1) the attempt to win the personal loyalty of the Merovingian bishops; (2) his effort to reform the Church by suppressing simony and outlawing too fast advancement in orders; (3) the reorganization of the Patrimony in Gaul; and (4) the reform of monastic discipline. Reorganization of the Patrimony, which is properly a part of church-state relations, and monastic reform, which is in Gaul of a piece with Gregory's work elsewhere in the West, will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

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1. Epp. III. 33.

2. Epp. V. 58.

Gregory's effort to win the personal loyalty of Gallican churchmen took the form of grants of honor such as the bestowal of the pallium[3] and gifts of relics.[4] On the grant of such an honor, he took the liberty of reminding the recipient of the claims of Rome implied thereby, and of the pastoral responsibility of the correspondent. So when Virgilius was sent the pallium and made vicar, he was reminded that an ancient custom was being revived and that the sees of Rome and Arles are as mother and daughter.[5]

Such grants imposed duties; so, in the same letters, the ruler of the mother Church was obliged to urge the suppression of the most prevalent abuses of the daughter: simony and the elevation of laymen to the episcopate.[6] The intention of the king and bishop in asking for the pallium was, however, to clarify the Frankish hierarchical structure and centralize their control of the Church.[7] Thus it is not surprising that, the

3. Gregory bestowed the pallium on Arles (Epp. V. 58), and Autun (VIII. 4; IX. 222); he refused it to Vienne (IX. 220) and to Lyons (XL. 40).

4. Epp. III. 33; VI. 48, etc.

5. "Sed quia cunctis liquet, unde in Galliarum regionibus fides sancta prodierit, cum priscam consuetudinem sedis aposto-licae vestra fraternitas repetit, quid aliud quam bona suboles ad sinum matris recurrit?" Epp. V. 58.

6. Epp. V. 58, 59. The consecration of laymen was a custom of long-standing in Gaul to judge from Greg. Tours, Hist. Franc.

7. Hence in Epp. V. 58-60, the stress on reform under the metropolitan in synod; Gregory was obviously asked to make this point.

symbol granted, the Merovingian Church ignored Gregory's demands that a reforming council be assembled. Although he sent the pallium to Syagrius of Autun specifically to force this end, and although he sent the Abbot Cyriacus from Rome to urge his case, Gregory was unable to get a hearing.[8]

Gregory turned to the Church in the Merovingian kingdoms only when he was invited to do so. When his authority was recognized, he asserted his right to reform Frankish Christianity. But the bishops had wanted to connect themselves only nominally with the Church of the former Imperial capitol. That the Bishop of Rome should be allowed to carry out a reform of their Church was out of the question.

Before we can make any general conclusions about the historical importance of Gregory's pontificate, we must consider first his relations with the barbarian princes and the Roman Emperor. For, in the story of Gregory's place in the transition from Roman to medieval, the ecclesiastical and the political elements are inseparable.

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8. Epp. IX. 212-216, 218-220, 222-226; XI. 38, 40-42, 46-51. It is interesting to note in passing the letters to Marseilles against iconoclasm (IX. 208; XI. 10) and that to Vienne against the teaching of non-Christian classical letters (XI. 34).

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH, THE EMPIRE AND THE BARBARIAN STATES

The view of the state enunciated by Gregory the Great is
motivated by precisely the same factors as his views of the Church,
the Papacy and the Episcopate. The secular ruler derives his
authority from God the saving Judge and must exercise it as the
minister of his Lord. Job, the type of Holy Church, is asked,

> Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee? Or
> will it abide by thy crib? Wilt thou bind the
> rhinoceros with thy band to the plough? Or will
> he break the clods of the valleys after thee?
> Wilt thou trust him, to bring back thy seed to
> thee, and to gather thy floor? (Job 39: 9-12)

Whether the rhinoceros--an animal of untamed nature which is, by
virtue of its pride and wealth, difficult to hold in check[1]--is
converted or unconverted he is used by God in the task of pre-
paring men for the coming Judge. The beast, the type of the
supreme powers of the kingdom of the world, raged at first against
the Church which was only preserved from destruction by grace. Now
in the Empire and in the future in the kingdoms, rhinoceros made
the servant of God must be fed at the manger of Scripture; he must
be harnassed by humility to the plough of God's purposes using
the very energies by which he once persecuted to defend the sound
faith (by which he is nourished) in order to break open the clods
of unrighteousness and of false doctrine; he must help in the

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1. _Moral. in Job_, XXXI. ii. 2.

harvesting of the seed planted by the divine sower.[2] The Church

must not fall into pride by exalting its role in guiding the

state to the derrogation of the virtue of the converted state;

nor must the princes, exalting in their own work for the evan-

gelical task of the Church, lapse into pride. For in the age of

persecution, God foreknew and intended that the princes should

come to be his servants.[3]

This is a theology of Church and State which need not insist

on a two power theory as in the early days of the recognition

period. There are no late pagans to protest, as to Ambrose or

Augustine, that Christianization of the Imperium is a betrayal

of the long-standing customs of Rome, of the mos majorem, adher-

ence to which is the source of Imperial strength. The Christian

way of life, the tradition of the Church fathers, is now the

acknowledged mainspring of Imperial policy; the Christian God

judges the Imperium by its adherence to his revealed will. Hence

the prince must put down wrong doctrine, foster righteousness,

and spread the Gospel within and beyond his realm.

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2. Moral. in Job, XXXI. ii. 2 - vii. 9.

3. "Quis ergo in initio nascentis Ecclesiae crederet, dum
contra eam ille indomitus principatus terrae tot minis et
cruciatibus saeviret, quia rhinoceros iste Deo sementem redderet,
id est acceptum praedicationis verbum operibus repensaret? . . .
Audiat igitur beatus Job quid gentilitatis principes faciant, et
nequaquam se apud semetipsum de gloria tantae suae virtutis
extollat. Audiat et rex potens, potentiores hujus mundi reges
quanta Deo devotione famulentur, et virtutem suam quasi pro
singularitate non trahat in elationis vitium, qui habet in aliis
exemplum, quia etsi tunc et similem Dominus non vidit, multos
tamen per quos ejus gloriam retunderet praevidit." Moral. in
Job. XXXI, vii. 9.

In this doctrine for a Christian society, one finds the source of Gregory's attitude toward the Empire, the Lombards and the Frankish kings. The vital issue is not the definition of spheres of authority, but the definition of the roles of the several officers within the one great sphere.[4]

Gregory's attitude toward the Imperial ruler is, as a result of his failure to distinguish between Church and State, very similar to his attitude toward the bishops; he is motivated by the eschatological urgency of the time to rebuke as the chief pastor the Emperor who, just as the bishop must prepare his flock, must prepare his subjects in righteousness to face the Judge. Prince and bishop in distinct offices perform a common task.

In the controversy over the usurpation by Constantinople of the ecumenical title this position is very clearly stated. The Emperor Maurice had evidently enjoined Gregory's silence in this affair, and Gregory, although he had sent unwritten protests by his legation in the capitol, had refrained from raising the issue in writing.[5] Finally, however, his sense of pastoral duty to speak out against the Faster's pride won the upper hand. The Emperor, he wrote, derives his power from God; he is "Deo constitutus dominus" of Church and of the Empire. The peace of the

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[4]. "In other words, Gregory never opposed Ecclesia to Respublica, but only to Saeculum, or the world; yet within the unified Church and State he recognized distinct offices and authorities, which it was his aim to keep, so far as possible, separate and independent." F. H. Dudden, Gregory the Great (1905), II, 239.

[5]. Epp. V. 37, 39, 45.

republic depends on the peace of the Church; therefore the Emperor must consider preservation of the latter peace one of the inherent duties of his office. The Romans and the Byzantines by pride associate themselves in sin with the barbarian forces, thus increasing the power of the enemy. What is needed is reform of the Church to stamp out pride and to promote true righteousness. The bishop can no longer keep silence concerning Constantinople's pride, for by condoning pride the law of the Empire confutes the sovereign law of God.[6] As the pagans had said the adoption of Christianity was a betrayal of the genius of the Roman republic, so now Gregory can say that furtherance of pride by the Christian _Imperium_ is a betrayal of the true genius of its destiny. It is, Gregory concedes to the Empress, right that Maurice enjoin peace in the Church, but the Church must protest John's flagrant sin and the prince cannot be allowed to condone it.[7]

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6. "Sed dum nos competentia nobis derelinquimus et nobis incompetentia cogitamus, peccata nostra barbaricis viribus sociamus, et culpa nostra hostium gladios exacuit, quae reipublicae vires gravat . . . Sed quis horum finis est, nisi quod hominibus suademus, Deo autem manifesti sumus? Quamobrem providentissime piisimus dominus ad compescendos bellicos motus pacem quaerit ecclesiae atque ad huius compagem sacerdotum dignatur corda reducere. Quod quidem ego opto atque, quantum ad me attinet, serenissimus iussionibus obeodentiam praebeo. Quia vero non causa mea, sed Dei est, et quia non solus ego, sed tota turbatur ecclesia, quia piae leges, quia veneranda synodus, quia ipsa etiam domini nostri Iesu Christi mandata superbi atque pompatici cuiusdam sermonis inventione turbantur, piisimus dominus locum secet vulneris atque resistentem aegrum augustae vinculis auctoritatis astringat." Epp. V. 37.

7. Epp. V. 39.

Gregory again stated his position clearly in a great and eloquent letter concerning the edict of 593 in which Maurice had ordered that no person could make a monastic profession or take ecclesiastical office who was in the service or employ of the Empire. This recalls in Gregory's mind the infamy of Julian the Apostate.[8] He agrees as to ecclesiastical office, for public servants who take such office often do so to serve their own ends; but those who take monastic vows have their obligations paid by their house and break all connection with the world. How can the state deny them the right to leave the world when the world is manifestly doomed? Some men may be able to keep their religion in the world, but others have to give up all things. The Emperor, who owes his place to Christ, denies Christ his soldiers; Gregory demands the Emperor remember who he is and whence he came:

> Ad haec ecce per me servum ultimum suum et vestrum respondit Christus, dicens: 'Ego te de notario comitem excubitorum, de comite scubitorum caesarem, de caesare imperatorem, nec solum hoc, sed etiam patrem imperatorum feci. Sacerdotes meos tuae manui commisi, et tu a meo servito milites subtrahis.' Responde rogo piissime domine servo tuo, quid venienti et haec dicenti responsurus es in iudicio Domino tuo?[9]

And yet, the government being superior in the legislative sphere to the pastorate, Gregory promulgated and obeyed the law even though it was not agreeable to God. He had acquitted himself of

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8. _Epp._ III. 64.

9. _Epp._ III. 61.

his duty, the culpability now rested in the Emperor: "Utrobique ergo quae debui exolvi, qui et imperatori oboedentiam praebui, et pro Deo quod sensi tacui."[1]

The Emperor is, then, to be exhorted in the light of the supremacy of God—the Judge of all men—to secure the peace of the Church. His laws, when they contradict divine law, are to be protested but obeyed. His provisions for the Church are to be obeyed when canonical; when they are uncanonical the Church must endure them only insofar as it can do so without sinning itself: "Quod vero ipse fecerit, si canonicum est, sequimur; si vero canonicum non est, in quantum sine peccato nostro, portamus."[2]

The question of Gregory's flattery of such evil, though officially Christian, rulers as queen Brunhild of the Franks and the next Emperor, Phocas, has given many difficulty. In one sense, it must be admitted that his servility represents the extent of the subjection of Rome to Constantinople since the time of Justinian and the basically uncritical way in which Gregory accepted the idea of the continuing Imperium. To condemn Gregory

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1. Ibid., Gregory's position is not to be confused with the recent German discussion of the duty, enjoined by Paul in Romans, of the Church to submit to the civil powers. Gregory speaks in a Christian society where Church and State represent the same power, though in distinct offices; the Germans are discussing their duty to obey a secular State which appears to be Antichrist. Gregory and Maurice seem ultimately to have adjusted amicably the protested legal proscription. (Epp. XIII. 10; X. 9.)

2. Epp. XI. 29. Gregory protests here the deposition of the Bishop of Prima Justiniana because of illness--an action taken despite the fact that the bishop had not requested permission to resign.

too harshly on this account is, however, to misunderstand his view of the obligations of the bishop to the secular ruler. Gregory states very clearly in the <u>Regula Pastoralis</u>[3] that the bishop is to admonish rulers to seek above all the perfection of their subjects, and is to admonish subjects humbly to submit themselves to their superiors lest they be judged for prideful usurpation. The bishop must keep the evangelical ideal before the prince; yet, as an individual, he must submit himself as a subject. Those who suffer the oppression of a wicked ruler have their own sins to blame for their condition; they had better repent for themselves than complain and compound their sin. So David endured Saul, leaving judgment to the Judge.[4] God controls history and rules rulers; the subject can only keep faith and seek to live righteously. Further, the bishop in his role as teacher must sometimes overlook the sins of those he admonishes and hold before them the highest ideals so as to shame them into repentance. Sometimes minor vices are to be ignored so that greater ones can first be overcome; subtleties cannot be approached when the subject is ignorant of even the most basic demands of the Gospel.[5] So without hypocrisy, the Pope can sing <u>Gloria in excelsis</u> when, "Dei incomprehensibili dispensatione", even Phocas

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3. III. 4.

4. <u>Moral. in Job.</u> xxv. 16. 34-37.

5. <u>Reg. Past.</u> III. 38, 39.

comes to the throne.[6] Their orthodoxy sets the Merovingian rulers
above other barbarian kings, so the Pope can rejoice in the fact
of their kingship and hold before them the high claims of
Christian righteousness.[7]

It is not necessary to catalogue Gregory's various disputes
with the Emperor over ecclesiastical matters; his position was
always in accord with the precepts outlined above. The Pope
preached God's judgment; when he had done this he submitted
humbly as a subject, having acquitted himself of his duty. The
Emperor was careful to interfere in Church government in such a
way that Gregory could in good conscience submit.

The result was that, although Gregory denounced boldly, he
in reality gained little or no ground. Many issues--as we have
noted in the preceding chapter--ended in a stalemate; in others--
as the matter of the ecumenical title--the East could go its own
way, having only the voice of Rome to fear.

This explanation does not, however, cover Gregory the
Great's attitude to Italian politics. In Italy, Gregory seems
to have regarded himself as ruler of the city and its depen-
dencies. In defiance of both Exarch and Emperor, he negotiated
peace with the Arian Lombards--an action which he was legally

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6. Epp. XIII. 34. Dudden, Gregory the Great. II, 264ff,
exonorates Gregory for variant reasons which are valid, but
secondary.

7. Epp. VI. 5, 6, etc.

incompetent to take.[8] The justification for this attitude, and
its effects, must be examined in some detail.

The problem of Gregory's relations with the civil powers
in Italy cannot properly be approached until we have dealt with
his view of himself as ruler of the Patrimony of St. Peter.
Although properly this consideration falls under the exercise
of the Roman episcopate--or of the Western Patriarchate--it
must be considered here in the light of the frequent allegations
that Gregory's management of the Patrimony foreshadows the emer-
gence of the Pope as a sovereign prince of this world by virtue
of his rule of the vast Papal States. This is quite a false
view of the Gregorian Patrimony; it results from the tendency
to read back into the sixth century the conditions of the
middle ages.[9] The Patrimony of St. Peter was, simply, that
series of estates throughout the Western Imperium which was

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8. T. Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders (1895), V. 366.

9. E. Spearing, The Patrimony of the Roman Church in the
Time of Gregory the Great (1918), xiv-xv, is expressing the
common sentiment when he holds that the Patrimony is the foun-
dation-stone of medieval Papacy: ". . . the temporal power of
the Papacy has been a condition precedent to the exercise of
its spiritual authority." Dudden, Gregory the Great, II, 42,
actually refers to Gregory as a "temporal prince." The more
tenable view of the emergence of the temporal Papacy is that
of L. Duchesne in The Beginnings of the Temporal Sovereignty
of the Popes (1908); Msgr. Duchesne holds that "temporal power
had its origin in the repugnance of the Romans to becoming
Lombards, and in their inability to organize their autonomy
unless the Pope was placed at its head" (p. 273). Even so, it
seems to me that--so long as the idea of an Imperial state with
Sovereign power in Western Europe controlled the minds of men--
it is anachronistic to speak of the Papacy as a temporal power
in the later sense. Granted that in the time of Gregory the

left by will or given by grant to the Popes, the income of which was used to dispense charity and to administer the Church. All sees and many monasteries had such holdings.

The Patrimony is probably as old as the recognized Church, but nothing specific is known about it before the rule of St. Gelasius (492-496). Under Gelasius, the Patrimony appears to have been widespread and to have assumed already the general organizational character which is only fully seen in the time of Gregory I.[1] It seems the only tenable hypothesis that Gregory, rather than drastically reforming or reorganizing the Patrimonies, was simply the first Pope in the period after the wars of Justinian and the Lombard incursion who devoted consider-able time to the management of the estates. After almost a century of chaos no little attention was needed to restore Papal control of the estates and to return them to proper management; on the other hand, there is little evidence of a sweeping reform of the management of the estates.

This is not to say that the extent of the Patrimonies was

Patrimony lent prestige to the Roman Church, the Pope did not and could not assert himself as an incipient sovereign prince. Even the donations of Pepin to Stephen II did not, so long as the Roman--or Carolongian--Imperial idea remained in force, make the Papacy a principality which held its territory in opposition to the Imperial sovereignty. There was but one sovereign power until the emergence of the national kingdoms, and that was the Imperial-ecclesiastical power which acted as vicar of the Creator and Judge.

1. Spearing, Patrimony in the Time of Gregory, 1; L. Bréhier and R. Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, les États barbares, et la conquête arabe (1938), 542f.

not vast or their importance not considerable.[2] Nor is it to say
that the care taken by Gregory and his managerial acumen were not
remarkable. It is simply to affirm, first, that Gregory was not
an innovator simply because he managed the large land holdings
of the Church, and, second, that he in no way regarded himself
as a temporal prince by virtue of these properties.

On the other hand, the fact that the Church was a large
landholder was not without political significance. Against
Constantinople and the Lombards, it was important that Rome
could be fed with the fruits of the Sicilian Patrimony.[3] In
Gaul, Candidus, a presbyter, acted as rector and as papal ambas-
sador; he was to spend the income of the estates on charitable
and missionary endeavors in the North of Europe.[4] Defensors
and rectors were scattered throughout the Latin world as papal
land agents; Gregory innovated only in using them as visitors
and arbitrators in ecclesiastical affairs.[5]

The fact that Gregory did not regard himself as a sovereign
prince makes the fact of his assumption of an active role in
Italian politics even more difficult. Although it is impossible
to justify his action in a constitutional way, it is, I think,

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2. Dudden, Gregory the Great, I, 296ff, gives an idea of
their extent.

3. Epp. I. 2, 70; IX. 115.

4. Epp. VI. 5, 6. 10.

5. Epp. I, 67; III. 22, 35; VIII. 23; X. 4; IX. 120, 142.
(This is by no means an exhaustive list).

possible to understand it in terms of the political reality of
life in Italy in the 590's and in terms of the doctrine of last
things.

Gregory realized that he had become Pope at a crucial
juncture. He made the significant remark in an early letter that,
by divine retribution for his sins, he had become a Lombard and
not a Roman bishop: "non Romanorum, sed Langobardorum episcopus
factus sum."[6] The letters to Constantinople show that the sen-
tence is to be taken as hyperbole; Gregory was still the first
of the bishops of the Christian Roman Empire. But at the same
time he realized that the destiny of Rome lay in the hands of
the Arian tribesmen, sent by God to punish the sins of the Roman
city. In a real sense, insofar as his office as metropolitan
and Bishop of the City was concerned, he was in fact a bishop
of the Lombards.

In one of the Homilies on Ezechiel, preached at the darkest
hour of the Lombard crisis, Gregory speaks of the devastation of
Italy and the depopulation and poverty of the City. Ezechiel
predicted that Samaria would be destroyed; he prefigured, said
Gregory, the destruction of Rome which he saw as an imminent
reality and as punishment for Rome's sin. The mistress of the
world has been reduced to nothing.[7] It is with a devastatingly

6. Epp. I. 30.

7. "Ipse autem quae aliquando mundi domina esse videbatur
qualis remanserit Roma conspicimus." Hom. in Ezech. II. VI. 22.

realistic sense of contemporary history that Gregory exegetes

Ezechiel's prophecy. Rome was set up as a pot and filled as

with water and bones; over the fire it seethed with the lust for

power and glory. But Rome is no longer mistress: the dependent

nations, the Senate, the people are gone. The pot has boiled

dry. The empty pot is dissolving on the fire. No saviour from

Constantinople or Lombardy bothers to remove the pot from the

fire to preserve what is left.[8] Rome's only hope is that the

remnant, penitent and righteous, can preserve the city. The

situation is desperate and total doom is imminent. No outsiders

are interested--not the Exarch, not the Emperor, not the Arians.

It is not because he is a prince of the world--or because he has

derived or usurped from Constantinople the power to act--that

Gregory can negotiate with the Lombards. It is simply because

there is no one else left to act.

The history of Gregory's negotiations with the Lombards is

long and complicated, and can be dealt with only summarily here.

The Arian tribe had been governed by one Agilulf since the death

in 590 of Authari. Authari's widow, Theodelinda--a Catholic

although she was inclined to favor the anti-Constantinopolitan

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8. Hom. in Ezech. II. VI. 22-24. "Quia enim senatus deest,
populus interiit, et tamen in paucis qui sunt dolores et gemitus
quotidie multiplicantur, jam vacua ardet Roma. Quid autem ista
de hominibus dicimus, cum, ruinis crebrescentibus, ipsa quoque
destrui aedificia videmus. Unde apte de civitate jam vacua
subditur; Incalescat, et liquefiat aes ejus. Jam enim et ipsa
olla consumitur, in qua prius et carnes et ossa consumebantur,
quia postquam defecerunt homines, etiam parietes cadunt. Ubi
autem sunt qui in ejus aliquando gloria laetabantur? Ubi eorum
pompa? Ubi superbia? Ubi frequens et immoderatum gaudium?"
Hom. in Evang. II. vi. 22. Dudden, Gregory the Great, II, 18,
calls this "a weird funeral oration."

schismatics[9]--had determined the succession by taking Agilulf as her husband. Although the king was comparatively strong ruler, the tribe had never been noted for cohesiveness.[1] The powerful dukes of Spoleto and Benevento were likely at any time to undertake military expeditions without the support of the king. Moreover the Exarchs of Ravenna, with only small forces and little support from Constantinople, were not desirous of attempting to put down the invaders, who annually threatened the Imperial cities of central Italy.[2]

In 592, Gregory had already begun independent negotiations with the Arians. Ariulf of Spoleto had made a raid on the city inflicting considerable losses. The small military legion in Rome, long unpaid, could barely be urged to stand their guard, let alone risk their lives in defense of the City. Gregory urged John of Ravenna to remind the Exarch of his duty and hinted his intention to negotiate a peace with Ariulf despite the Imperial governor, if necessary.[3] Gregory evidently completed successfully several truces or treaties with the Lombards, paying the tribute money from the funds of his See. After the first truce, however, the Imperial forces broke Gregory's agree-

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9. Epp. IV. 4, 33.

1. Dudden, Gregory the Great. I, 158ff; II. 3-7; Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand. 48-53.

2. Epp. II. 7, 32-34.

3. Epp. II. 45.

ment and withdrew the army from the city to the defense of Perusia. Agilulf finally stormed Rome, taking captives for sale as slaves.[4]

In 595 the crisis occurred. At the time of the delivery of the Ezechiel homilies, Agilulf appeared at the city gates. Ravenna was uninterested in the plight of the citizens, though Agilulf was, Gregory assured the Exarch, willing to conclude a peace if only the Romans will make some amends for the damages incurred when the last truce was broken.[5] Gregory evidently met the King himself and negotiated a treaty.[6]

The Emperor, informed by the Exarch of Gregory's high-handed action, reprimanded the Pope, inspiring a famous and angry reply from the prelate.[7] Gregory took offense at being called simplicitatis, retorting that Maurice thereby implied he was fatuus. He was outraged that Constantinople could sit back complacently, criticizing the bishop, while the Lombards, unchallenged, ravaged Italy. The Papacy had at great expense and after great suffering done the duty of the Empire; if Maurice considered this a sin, Gregory preferred to rely on the mercy of Jesus when he comes as Judge than to count on the justice of

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4. Epp. V. 36.

5. Epp. V. 34.

6. Anon. Whitby monk, Vita Greg. XXIII; Paul Diac. Vita Greg. XXVI. The details of these accounts are not reliable.

7. Epp. V. 36.

the Emperor.[8]

A new truce was negotiated in 598 by the Exarch Callinicus; in this event Gregory's emissaries played an important role as arbitrators between the Romans and the Lombards.[9] This was a new role for Gregory but one which he seemed to find more agreeable to himself since he had finally aroused the proper officials to action. Callinicus broke the truce, however,[1] and it was not renewed until the advent of Phocas' Exarch, Smaragdus, in 603.[2] At Gregory's death, Theodelinda had given birth to a son who was baptized a Catholic;[3] it looked as though, in his reign, some settlement could finally be made.

In all this Lombard conflict, Gregory acted out of necessity. The proper authorities had failed to act; the bishops, then, had to take the initiative. Someone had to act to acquit Roman society of the duty to act righteously before the coming of the Judge; if governmental concern for the peace of the people could not move Maurice to act, then the pastoral concern of the bishop would have to suffice as justification for an innovation. Gregory did not intend or claim to usurp the government of Italy, or of

8. "Hoc tamen breviter dico, quoniam peccator et indignus plus de venientis Jesu misericordia, quam de vestrae pietatis iustitia praesumo." Epp. V. 36.

9. Epp. IX. 11. 44, 66. 67.

1. Paul Diac. Hist. Long. IV. 20, 23-25, 28.

2. Epp. XIII. 36.

3. Epp. XIV. 12.

any portion of the peninsula, from its rightful ruler--it might
have been a happier thing for Italy in the next two centuries
had he done so. He was, on the contrary, gratified when peace
was finally negotiated through proper channels. His action
probably saved Italy from complete Lombard domination and pre-
served for the fiction of Imperial overlordship its last basis
in fact. Gregory left Italy essentially as he found it. He
left only a precedent for Papal action when the Empire failed
to do its duty.

Gregory's relations with the Merovingian houses were closely
related to his efforts to institute reforms in the Gallican
Church. His only concern in writing the Franks was pastoral.
Thus it is correct to say with F. W. Kellett, against those who
see in the renewal of contact with Gaul an attempt to secure an
ally against Constantinople or the Lombards, that, in the
Merovingian correspondence, "we find no trace of what we may
call political motives."[4] Gregory was concerned simply to
make the Franks aware of their duty as Christian monarchs to
promote righteousness in the Church so that they might be pre-
pared themselves to face the Judge who was the source of their
authority.

Gregory's exhortations to the Merovingians are instructive
of his view of secular authority with regard to the Church.

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4. Pope Gregory the Great and His Relations with Gaul
(1889), 76.

Every letter begins with at least a sentence regarding the duty
of the Catholic monarch. Kingship, he tells Childebert, is an
exalted position, but to be a king is neither so unusual nor so
great as to be a Catholic king when there are kings nearby who
are not orthodox. Having this great gift, the Catholic ruler
must let his light shine before his subjects and before the
other nations.[5] The great gift of being a Catholic king is also
a heavy responsibility: it requires that the king acknowledge
who is his lord by perfecting his realm in order to please God.
So any laxity or corruption must be a source of distress.[6]
Gregory realized that strong action by the Merovingian rulers to
reform their Church would jeopardize their control of the kingdom
by increasing or fostering some autonomy in the Church. Simony
and the placement of royal lay candidates in episcopal office
were quite obviously to the advantage of the Merovingians.
Gregory faced this fact boldly, urging Brunhild to offer a sac-
rifice of her own authority to God by conquering the internal

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5. "Quanto ceteros homines regia dignitas antecedit, tanto
ceterarum gentium regna regni vestri profecto culmen excellit.
Esse autem regem, quia sunt et alii, non mirum est, sed esse
catholicum, quod alii non merentur, hoc satis est. Sicut enim
magnae lampadis splendor in tetrae noctis obscuritate luminis
sui claritate fulgescit, ita fidei vestrae claritas inter
aliarum gentium obscuram perfidiam rutilat ac coruscat." Epp.
VI. 6.

6. "Cum regni vestri nomen inter cetera gratia olim
christianae religionis effulserit, valde studendum est, ut, unde
gloriosiores ceteris gentibus eminentis, inde omnipotenti Domino,
qui dat salutem reibus, perfectius placeatis et fidem quam
colitis adiutricem in omnibus habeatis." Epp. IX. 215.

enemy so that God might respond by conquering her foreign enemies: do God's work and he will do yours.[7] It is not enough just to rule as a Catholic over semi-barbarians;[8] the ruler must be thoroughly Christian even though to do so is seemingly foolish.

The small Petrine Patrimony in Gaul had evidently fallen under Frankish control by Gregory's time. The Pope reasserted his control over its management, sending a rector who also acted as his ambassador to the royal and episcopal courts, but ordering that the rents were to be expended in the North and not sent to Rome.[9] The rulers were obliged to assist the rector in restoring the full equities of the Roman See in its Gallican landholdings.[1]

Again and again, with great patience in view of the deafness of his addressees to his claims, Gregory set forth the duties of the Christian ruler to guard the purity of the Church. Although he may not have been aware of the true character of the Meroving- ians--their letters to him seem to have emphasized their Catholic zeal[2]--he was aware of the faults of the Frankish Church. Jews

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7. "Facite quod Dei est, et Deus faciet quod vestrum . . . Sacrificium Deo devicto interiore hoste offerte, ut exteriores adversarios ipso adiuvante vincatis et, quale vos contra inimicos ipsius studium gesseritis, talem illum in vestro invamine senti- atis. Mihi autem credite, quia, sicut multorum iam experimento didicimus, in damno expenditur, quicquid.cum peccato congregatur. Si igitur vultis nil iniuste perdere, summopere studete de iniustitia nil habere. In terrenis etenim rebus semper causa damni est origo peccati." Epp. XI. 49.

8. Epp. XI. 49. ("efferta corda gentilium").

9. Epp. VI. 10.

1. Epp. VI. 5, 6.

2. Epp. V. 60; XI. 49; XIII. 7, etc.

were allowed to keep Christian slaves,[3] there were individual grievances;[4] simony and the consecration of novices to the episcopate were more the norm than the exception.[5] In all these things Gregory constantly and insistently set forth the claims of righteousness and the demand for reform. His dream of a reforming synod,[6] however, was doomed because the Merovingians profited more from the present system. Yet he did elicit some assistance from the Franks for the English mission. He was thankful for this evidence of charity, but said always that more evidence of charity at home would be cause for greater thanksgiving.[7]

Gregory was given the opportunity to take an interest in Gallican Church life and, because of his concern as the heir of Peter to maintain the purity of the Church, seized every occasion to set before the Merovingian monarchs the claims of Christ. He realized that these claims were against the self-interest of the rulers, but his faith in the certainty of historic retribution forced him to preach continually his program of reform.

The time has come to evaluate Gregory's pastorate in terms of our examination in this chapter and the preceeding one of

3. Epp. IX. 215.

4. Epp. IX. 212, 226.

5. Epp. VIII. 4; IX. 215; XI. 49, 51, etc.

6. Epp. XI. 49, etc.

7. Epp. XI. 47, 48, 50, 51.

his doctrine and work. It is easy to overemphasize the fact that
Gregory is a pivotal figure in the history of the Papacy, and yet
this is, ironically, the most important thing about him. What is
meant by this seemingly paradoxical statement is that Gregory
the Great is a pivotal figure in the history of Western Christian-
ity, but not in the same sense as historians have usually under-
stood this fact.

Since Henri Pirenne's time, historians have been forced to
reinterpret Gregory's work in terms of the Pirenne thesis--or
in terms of the reevaluations of Western history the Belgian
historian has forced on scholarship. Unfortunately, however,
these reinterpretations have relied upon secondary studies of
the Pope which were completed before the reevaluation of his
period. So a recent historian, H.St. L. B. Moss,[8] says that Gregory
dealt with crises of the new order as they arose, and in terms
of the thought patterns of the old:

> He is Janus-like figure. One aspect foreshadows
> (at least, to later eyes) the Papal domination of
> the West, the temporal power of the Church, the
> peculiar blend of legalism and mystic doctrine
> which characterizes medieval thought. The other
> aspect shows us the greatest of those Roman nobles
> turned bishop, who, in Gaul, Africa, or Italy,
> through the wreckage of the Empire led their retainers
> in a desperate fight against the swamping deluge of
> barbarian invasion, owing what success they gained
> less to the material forces at their command than to
> the unwilling respect accorded by their enemies to
> strength and nobility of character, and to the
> glamour of an ancient civilization.
>   As his epitaph proclaims him, Gregory is 'God's
> Consul'--a Roman statesman, last of his line.

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8. The Birth of the Middle Ages (1957), 137.

What Moss says is largely correct, but it depends upon an assumed historical continuity in the Papacy in which St. Gregory is a transitional figure between two periods. It is this assumption of continuity which we must challenge; we may be able ultimately to affirm that Gregory had much to do with the character of the medieval Papacy, but we must first disabuse ourselves of the notion that his accomplishments were results of his political and ecclesiastical achievements.

That Gregory's achievement as Pope vis à vis the other Churches and the old and new civil powers was not so great as was once thought is, it seems to me, the inevitable conclusion of the survey of his work in these two chapters. Gregory was forced to act by his Latin concept of the individual who finds fulfillment in complete self-subjection to the needs and purposes of the Church and of society. His compulsion to act was heightened by his realistic interpretation of his own age as a moment of crucial historic import, a last time, the last day of Rome. We must accept the fact--however repulsive Gregory's mythical imagery may have been to older historicans or to ourselves--that the eschatology of the Gregorian Corpus, coupled with the sense of duty to act as revealed in the Epistles, motivated everything he did. These elements are not late barbarisms but the mainsprings of Latin thought in the tradition of Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine,[9] expressed now by means of an imagery

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9. Gregory once advised an admirer that, rather than imbibe the still water of his Ezechiel Homilies, he would profit more

which is sometimes barbarized.

It is this motivational element which gives the letters their strength--a strength from which it is easily concluded that this man must have made his mark on the Church. But scrupulous examination of Gregory's affairs reveals a failure which might have turned a weaker man in on himself.[1] His reform program simply did not coincide with the needs and desires of the other bishops, of the Emperor, of the barbarian kings. The bishops were forced to suffer corruption in the Church and to glorify their own positions in order to maintain what little power they had left against caesaropapal encroachments. The Emperor was too weak either to reconquer or to reform; he had to bow to the Church and yet to seek to control it by appointments in order to maintain support for his regime in the Church, which was--for all its faults--the last strong force in Roman society. The Frankish Monarchs and their bishops were for similar reasons not anxious to reform. Moreover it would appear that Gregory was one of few men left who saw the necessity of action and had a doctrine of purposeful history: history and action were not important in the

by drinking of the profound torrents of Ambrose and Augustine. _Epp_. XII. 160.

1. It is remarkable to me that, in view of his failures, Gregory did not become a thorough-going mystic. But, although the eschatology faded in the middle years of the Pontificate, it revived again toward the end as strongly as ever. Hence Butler's study of Gregory as a mystic (Western Mysticism /1951/) emphasizes an element in isolation which can, it seems to me, only be properly understood in the light of the continued emphasis on works in the world before the end.

East where historic institutions were seen as mere shadows of divine, spiritualized perfection; and Merovingian Gaul, to judge by the early appearance of decadence in the once strong house of Clovis, had no sense of historic purpose and no social dynamic.

What Gregory did was to make an impression on his age. All ears might seemingly be deaf to him but he persisted in acquitting himself of his duty to speak as chief pastor for reform. At least the ground did not fall from under the Church's feet. The Empire kept a foothold in Italy thanks to Gregory's firm policy with the Lombards. His voice made him a person with whom Constantinople had at least to reckon. His remonstrances presented claims of righteousness long-since forgotten in Gaul. The Roman Bishop's claim to supreme pastoral jurisdiction was stated clearly and widely so that few in places of influence did not know at least that Peter's successor claimed primacy.

Gregory accepted the old Imperial order as the basis of Western civilization, yet did not deny the importance of the new. He was Roman in motivation, Roman in orientation, and Roman in his historical realism.

The fact of Gregory's debt to the passing order and of his failure to achieve an immediate rapprochement with the new is manifested by the history of his successors to about the time of Gregory II.

In Italy affairs in the seventh century continued along the same lines as in the sixth; Gregory's temporary arrest of Roman decay--if it was even an arrest--had quite failed. The Lombard

tribe remained a weak and divided nation, capable, as it always had been of being defeated by an Imperial offensive of only moderate strength.[2] But the Lombards were never defeated nor did they consolidate their power. The years 626-652 saw an Arian-nationalist reaction to Romanization and catholicization. The latter forces triumphed finally, but the Popes were never reconciled with the Lombards--even with the great Liutprand (712-744), who was a zealous Catholic and a friend of the monks but wanted to unite Italy under his sceptre without the support of Rome--because of their political attachment to Ravenna and to Constantinople. Paul the Deacon, writing in the time of Charles the Great, ended his History of the Lombards with the death of Liutprand. Though he was a biographer of Pope Gregory I and a member of the Benedictine community at Monte Cassino, Paul reflected the lack of significance attached to the Papacy by the Lombards in this period. Of the thirty Popes from Benedict I (574) to Zacharias (d. 741) he recalled but twelve, and those--except for Benedict, Pelagius II and Gregory--only incidentally.[3]

Gregory's Lombard policy and his charities had evidently depleted the Papal treasury. There is evidence that under his successor, Sabinian, Papal activity was sharply curtailed and

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2. This account of the Lombards depends largely on F. Lot, The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages (1931), 285-296.

3. See the edition of Hist. Long. by W. D. Foulke (1907). Paul's sources for Gregory in this work and in the Vita were largely English, although he also used the Papal archives or had access to the Corpus in a monastic library.

grain, formerly given the Roman citizenry, was sold at a high price.[4]
Honorius (625-628) was anathematized by the Sixth Ecumenical
Council for his support of the heretic Sergius of Constantinople.
In 692, an effort was made to Byzantinize the Latin liturgy.[5]
For thirty years after 685, the See of Peter was occupied by a
succession of Greek Popes. It looked as though, voluntarily or
involuntarily, Rome had succumbed to Constantinople. Unable to
come to terms with Lombardy, again out of contact with Merovingian
Gaul,[6] the Bishops of Rome were fast becoming puppets of a distant
and weak Caesaropapism.

In the first half of the eighth century the great Mediterranean
crisis occurred. In the century between the death of Mohammed and
the battle of Poitiers (732), the Empire of the Romans collapsed
before the Moslem onslaught--an unprecedented outbreak of Arab-
ianism which later consolidated its position by developing an
Arabian-Islamic culture.[7] This was no influx of a people sus-
ceptible of Romanization: law, language and religion made the
two orders at this stage absolutely incompatible.[8] That the
Arabs were checked at the gates of Constantinople and in Gaul

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4. Paul Diac. Vita Gregorii, xxix; Bréhier & Aigrain,
Grégoire le Grand. 392f.

    5. Lot, End of the Ancient World. 299.

    6. Kellett, Gregory the Great. 83ff.

    7. P. Hitti, The Arabs (1956), 61.

    8. H. Pirenne, A History of Europe (1955), 48ff.

redounds not so much to the credit of the Roman remnant as to the fact that the expansive energy of the Saracens had simply burned itself out.[9] Yet the arrest of the Arabs occurred only after the face of Europe had been utterly changed.

The reign of the Emperor Leo III, the Isaurian. (717-740), should have forced the Roman Bishops to regard themselves as no longer beholden to Constantinople. In 732, the Pope was deprived of Patriarchal authority in Illyricum, Sicily and Sardinia.[1] The weakness of the Popes is manifest in the fact that no great offense was taken at this action. But more important, Leo precipitated the Iconoclastic controversy.[2] Whatever the reasons for the policy of Leo, he was supported by the Platonic presuppositions of Eastern theology concerning the baseness of all things physical. That the West reacted so strongly as it did is not so much a credit to the Popes as it is a reflection of that Occidental realism which was unable to see any difficulty in the use of images in the Churches.[3] Finally, the fall of Ravenna in

9. Hitti, The Arabs. 74.

1. Lot, End of the Ancient World. 301; Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 456f.

2. Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand. 430ff.

3. Gregory the Great himself had reacted violently against a proto-iconoclasm in Marseilles, Epp. IX. 208; XI. 10. He held, first, that the use of icons in churches had never before been challenged, and, second, that images were useful for the edification of the illiterate. He did not, however, admit the adoration of images.

751 and the end of the Exarchate left the Popes with the necessity of defeating or capitulating to the Lombards.[4]

Meanwhile in Gaul, the weak Merovingian monarchy had lost its power to the Mayors of the Palace of the house of Pepin of Heristal. When Pepin's son Charles Martel had checked the Arabs at Poitiers in 732, the Carolingians appeared as the new force for France.[5] But as yet they had no more sense of destiny and no more purpose to build civilization anew than had the Merovingians, who yet held nominal sway over the Franks.

The middle of the eighth century saw Europe without an Empire and apparently without forces dynamic enough to rebuild Christian civilization. The last stand of Rome in the person of Gregory the Great had been too weak to save the West from disaster. Yet the second half of the same century saw Western forces consolidating and rebuilding with a dynamic which was strikingly Gregorian. The conventional approach to the rebirth of this dynamic is that it occurred by means of the Carolingians and the Papacy. The House of Pepin is said to have arisen to meet the crisis in the north. The Papacy is said, almost mystically, to have retained its self-consciousness and to have revived its dynamic motivation under pressure of the crisis in an effort to revive the Empire.[6] But we have seen that the spirit of Gregory

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4. Lot, End of the Ancient World. 307f.

5. Pirenne, History of Europe. 74; Hitti, The Arabs. 92.

6. So T. Jalland, The Church and the Papacy (1949), 362ff.

was bankrupt and that the Franks as yet had no sense of destiny. We will have to look elsewhere for the survival of the old Roman Christian dynamism which characterized the later history of the West. And when we find the force we will see that it derived from Gregory's only work outside the structure of Imperial Rome. The Empire of Charles the Great did not rise like the phoenix from the ashes of Roman society, it was a revival of the Gregorian-Latin spirit from the seed planted by the Pope in Saxon England.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH, THE EMPIRE AND THE BARBARIAN STATES

The view of the state enunciated by Gregory the Great is
motivated by precisely the same factors as his views of the Church,
the Papacy and the Episcopate. The secular ruler derives his
authority from God the saving Judge and must exercise it as the
minister of his Lord. Job, the type of Holy Church, is asked,

> Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee? Or
> will it abide by thy crib? Wilt thou bind the
> rhinoceros with thy band to the plough? Or will
> he break the clods of the valleys after thee?
> Wilt thou trust him, to bring back thy seed to
> thee, and to gather thy floor? (Job 39: 9-12)

Whether the rhinoceros--an animal of untamed nature which is, by
virtue of its pride and wealth, difficult to hold in check[1]--is
converted or unconverted he is used by God in the task of pre-
paring men for the coming Judge. The beast, the type of the
supreme powers of the kingdom of the world, raged at first against
the Church which was only preserved from destruction by grace. Now
in the Empire and in the future in the kingdoms, rhinoceros made
the servant of God must be fed at the manger of Scripture; he must
be harnassed by humility to the plough of God's purposes using
the very energies by which he once persecuted to defend the sound
faith (by which he is nourished) in order to break open the clods
of unrighteousness and of false doctrine; he must help in the

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1. *Moral. in Job.* XXXI. 11. 2.

harvesting of the seed planted by the divine sower.[2] The Church must not fall into pride by exalting its role in guiding the state to the derrogation of the virtue of the converted state; nor must the princes, exalting in their own work for the evangelical task of the Church, lapse into pride. For in the age of persecution, God foreknew and intended that the princes should come to be his servants.[3]

This is a theology of Church and State which need not insist on a two power theory as in the early days of the recognition period. There are no late pagans to protest, as to Ambrose or Augustine, that Christianization of the Imperium is a betrayal of the long-standing customs of Rome, of the mos majorem, adherence to which is the source of Imperial strength. The Christian way of life, the tradition of the Church fathers, is now the acknowledged mainspring of Imperial policy; the Christian God judges the Imperium by its adherence to his revealed will. Hence the prince must put down wrong doctrine, foster righteousness, and spread the Gospel within and beyond his realm.

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2. Moral. in Job. XXXI. ii. 2 - vii. 9.

3. "Quis ergo in initio nascentis Ecclesiae crederet, dum contra eam ille indomitus principatus terrae tot minis et cruciatibus saeviret, quia rhinoceros iste Deo sementem redderet, id est acceptum praedicationis verbum operibus repensaret? . . . Audiat igitur beatus Job quid gentilitatis principes faciant, et nequaquam se apud semetipsum de gloria tantae suae virtutis extollat. Audiat et rex potens, potentiores hujus mundi reges quanta Deo devotione famulentur, et virtutem suam quasi pro singularitate non trahat in elationis vitium, qui habet in aliis exemplum, quia etsi tunc et similem Dominus non vidit, multos tamen per quos ejus gloriam retunderet praevidit." Moral. in Job. XXXI. vii. 9.

In this doctrine for a Christian society, one finds the source of Gregory's attitude toward the Empire, the Lombards and the Frankish kings. The vital issue is not the definition of spheres of authority, but the definition of the roles of the several officers within the one great sphere.[4]

Gregory's attitude toward the Imperial ruler is, as a result of his failure to distinguish between Church and State, very similar to his attitude toward the bishops; he is motivated by the eschatological urgency of the time to rebuke as the chief pastor the Emperor who, just as the bishop must prepare his flock, must prepare his subjects in righteousness to face the Judge. Prince and bishop in distinct offices perform a common task.

In the controversy over the usurpation by Constantinople of the ecumenical title this position is very clearly stated. The Emperor Maurice (539-602) had evidently enjoined Gregory's silence in this affair, and Gregory, although he had sent unwritten protests by his legation in the capitol, had refrained from raising the issue in writing.[5] Finally, however, his sense of pastoral duty to speak out against the Faster's[a] pride won the upper hand. The Emperor, he wrote, derives his power from God; he is "Deo constitutus dominus" of Church and of the Empire. The peace of the

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4. "In other words, Gregory never opposed Ecclesia to Respublica, but only to Saeculum, or the world; yet within the unified Church and State he recognized distinct offices and authorities, which it was his aim to keep, so far as possible, separate and independent." F. H. Dudden, Gregory the Great (1905), II, 239.

5. Epp. V. 37, 39, 45.

a. John, called "the Faster," Patriarch of Constantinople (582-595). John had assumed the title "Ecumenical Patriarch." Gregory protested against the pride of this noted ascetic in a heated and lengthy dispute.

republio depends on the peaoe of the Churoh; therefore the Emperor must consider preservation of the latter peaoe one of the inherent duties of his offioe. The Romans and the Byzantines by pride assooiate themselves in sin with the barbarian forces, thus inoreasing the power of the enemy. What is needed is reform of the Church to stamp out pride and to promote true righteousness. The bishop oan no longer keep silence oonoerning Constantinople's pride, for by oondoning pride the law of the Empire oonfutes the sovereign law of God.[6] As the pagans had said the adoption of Christianity was a betrayal of the genius of the Roman republio, so now Gregory oan say that furtheranoe of pride by the Christian _Imperium_ is a betrayal of the true genius of its destiny. It is, Gregory conoedes to the Empress, right that Maurioe enjoin peaoe in the Churoh, but the Churoh must protest John's flagrant sin and the prinoe oannot be allowed to oondone it.[7]

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6. "Sed dum nos competentia nobis derelinquimus et nobis inoompetentia oogitamus, peooata nostra barbariois viribus sooiamus, et oulpa nostra hostium gladios exaouit, quae reipublioae vires gravat . . . Sed quis horum finis est, nisi quod hominibus suademus, Deo autem manifesti sumus? Quamobrem providentissime piisimus dominus ad oompesoendos bellioos motus pacem quaerit eoolesiae atque ad huius compagem sacerdotum dignatur oorda reduoere. Quod quidem ego opto atque, quantum ad me attinet, serenissimus iussionibus obeodentiam praebeo. Quia vero non oausa mea, sed Dei est, et quia non solus ego, sed tota turbatur eoolesia, quia piae leges, quia veneranda synodus, quia ipsa etiam domini nostri Iesu Christi mandata superbi atque pompatioi ouiusdam sermonis inventione turbantur, piisimus dominus looum seoet vulneris atque resistentem aegrum augustae vinoulis auotoritatis astringat." _Epp_. V. 37.

7. _Epp_. V. 39.

Gregory again stated his position clearly in a great and eloquent letter concerning the edict of 593 in which Maurice had ordered that no person could make a monastic profession or take ecclesiastical office who was in the service or employ of the Empire. This recalls in Gregory's mind the infamy of Julian the Apostate.[8] He agrees as to ecclesiastical office, for public servants who take such office often do so to serve their own ends; but those who take monastic vows have their obligations paid by their house and break all connection with the world. How can the state deny them the right to leave the world when the world is manifestly doomed? Some men may be able to keep their religion in the world, but others have to give up all things. The Emperor, who owes his place to Christ, denies Christ his soldiers; Gregory demands the Emperor remember who he is and whence he came:

> Ad haec ecce per me servum ultimum suum et vestrum respondit Christus, dicens: 'Ego te de notario comitem excubitorum, de comite soubitorum caesarem, de caesare imperatorem, nec solum hoc, sed etiam patrem imperatorum feci. Sacerdotes meos tuae manui commisi, et tu a meo servito milites subtrahis.' Responde rogo piissime domine servo tuo, quid venienti et haec dicenti responsurus es in iudicio Domino tuo?[9]

And yet, the government being superior in the legislative sphere to the pastorate, Gregory promulgated and obeyed the law even though it was not agreeable to God. He had acquitted himself of

8. _Epp_. III. 64.

9. _Epp_. III. 61.

his duty, the culpability now rested in the Emperor; "Utrobique ergo quae debui exolvi, qui et imperatori oboedentiam praebui, et pro Deo quod sensi tacui."[1]

The Emperor is, then, to be exhorted in the light of the supremacy of God—the Judge of all men—to secure the peace of the Church. His laws, when they contradict divine law, are to be protested but obeyed. His provisions for the Church are to be obeyed when canonical; when they are uncanonical the Church must endure them only insofar as it can do so without sinning itself: "Quod vero ipse fecerit, si canonicum est, sequimur; si vero canonicum non est, in quantum sine peccato nostro, portamus."[2]

The question of Gregory's flattery of such evil, though officially Christian, to rulers, such (?) as queen Brunhild of the Franks and the next Emperor, Phocas,[b] has given much difficulty. In one sense, it must be admitted that his servility represents the extent of the subjection of Rome to Constantinople since the time of Justinian and the basically uncritical way in which Gregory accepted the idea of the continuing Imperium. To condemn Gregory

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1. Ibid., Gregory's position is not to be confused with the recent German discussion of the duty, enjoined by Paul in Romans, of the Church to submit to the civil powers. Gregory speaks in a Christian society where Church and State represent the same power, though in distinct offices; the Germans are discussing their duty to obey a secular State which appears to be Antichrist. Gregory and Maurice seem ultimately to have adjusted amicably the protested legal proscription. (Epp. XIII. 10; X. 9.)

2. Epp. XI. 29. Gregory protests here the deposition of the Bishop of Prima Justiniana because of illness--an action taken despite the fact that the bishop had not requested permission to resign.

b. Phocas (602-610), a soldier from Cappadocia, had seized the Imperial throne from Maurice.

too harshly on this account is, however, to misunderstand his view of the obligations of the bishop to the secular ruler. Gregory states very clearly in the _Regula Pastoralis_[3] that the bishop is to admonish rulers to seek above all the perfection of their subjects, and is to admonish subjects humbly to submit themselves to their superiors lest they be judged for prideful usurpation. The bishop must keep the evangelical ideal before the prince; yet, as an individual, he must submit himself as a subject. Those who suffer the oppression of a wicked ruler have their own sins to blame for their condition; they had better repent for themselves than complain and compound their sin. So David endured Saul, leaving judgment to the Judge.[4] God controls history and rules rulers; the subject can only keep faith and seek to live righteously. Further, the bishop in his role as teacher must sometimes overlook the sins of those he admonishes and hold before them the highest ideals so as to shame them into repentance. Sometimes minor vices are to be ignored so that greater ones can first be overcome; subtleties cannot be approached when the subject is ignorant of even the most basic demands of the Gospel.[5] So without hypocrisy, the Pope can sing _Gloria in excelsis_ when, "Dei incomprehensibili dispensatione", even Phocas

3. III. 4.

4. _Moral. In Job_, xxv. 16. 34-37.

5. _Reg. Past._ III. 38, 39.

comes to the throne.[6] Their orthodoxy sets the Merovingian rulers
above other barbarian kings, so the Pope can rejoice in the fact
of their kingship and hold before them the high claims of
Christian righteousness.[7]

It is not necessary to catalogue Gregory's various disputes
with the Emperor over ecclesiastical matters; his position was
always in accord with the precepts outlined above. The Pope
preached God's judgment; when he had done this he submitted
humbly as a subject, having acquitted himself of his duty. The
Emperor was careful to interfere in Church government in such a
way that Gregory could in good conscience submit.

The result was that, although Gregory denounced boldly, he
in reality gained little or no ground. Many issues--as we have
noted in the preceding chapter--ended in a stalemate; in others--
as the matter of the ecumenical title--the East could go its own
way, having only the voice of Rome to fear.

This explanation does not, however, cover Gregory the
Great's attitude to Italian politics. In Italy, Gregory seems
to have regarded himself as ruler of the city and its depen-
dencies. In defiance of both Exarch and Emperor, he negotiated
peace with the Arian Lombards--an action which he was legally

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6. _Epp._ XIII. 34. Dudden, _Gregory the Great._ II, 264ff,
exonerates Gregory for variant reasons which are valid, but
secondary.

7. _Epp._ VI. 5, 6, etc.

incompetent to take.[8] The justification for this attitude, and its effects, must be examined in some detail.

The problem of Gregory's relations with the civil powers in Italy cannot properly be approached until we have dealt with his view of himself as ruler of the Patrimony of St. Peter. Although properly this consideration falls under the exercise of the Roman episcopate—or of the Western Patriarchate—it must be considered here in the light of the frequent allegations that Gregory's management of the Patrimony foreshadows the emergence of the Pope as a sovereign prince of this world by virtue of his rule of the vast Papal States. This is quite a false view of the Gregorian Patrimony; it results from the tendency to read back into the sixth century the conditions of the middle ages.[9] The Patrimony of St. Peter was, simply, that series of estates throughout the Western *Imperium* which was

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8. T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders* (1895), V. 366.

9. E. Spearing, *The Patrimony of the Roman Church in the Time of Gregory the Great* (1918), xiv-xv, is expressing the common sentiment when he holds that the Patrimony is the foundation-stone of medieval Papacy: ". . . the temporal power of the Papacy has been a condition precedent to the exercise of its spiritual authority." Dudden, *Gregory the Great*, II, 42, actually refers to Gregory as a "temporal prince." The more tenable view of the emergence of the temporal Papacy is that of L. Duchesne in *The Beginnings of the Temporal Sovereignty of the Popes* (1908); Msgr. Duchesne holds that "temporal power had its origin in the repugnance of the Romans to becoming Lombards, and in their inability to organize their autonomy unless the Pope was placed at its head" (p. 273). Even so, it seems to me that—so long as the idea of an Imperial state with Sovereign power in Western Europe controlled the minds of men—it is anachronistic to speak of the Papacy as a temporal power in the later sense. Granted that in the time of Gregory the

left by will or given by grant to the Popes, the income of which was used to dispense charity and to administer the Church. All sees and many monasteries had such holdings.

The Patrimony is probably as old as the recognized Church, but nothing specific is known about it before the rule of St. Gelasius (492-496). Under Gelasius, the Patrimony appears to have been widespread and to have assumed already the general organizational character which is only fully seen in the time of Gregory I.[1] It seems the only tenable hypothesis that Gregory, rather than drastically reforming or reorganizing the Patrimonies, was simply the first Pope in the period after the wars of Justinian and the Lombard incursion who devoted considerable time to the management of the estates. After almost a century of chaos no little attention was needed to restore Papal control of the estates and to return them to proper management; on the other hand, there is little evidence of a sweeping reform of the management of the estates.

This is not to say that the extent of the Patrimonies was

Patrimony lent prestige to the Roman Church, the Pope did not and could not assert himself as an incipient sovereign prince. Even the donations of Pepin to Stephen II did not, so long as the Roman--or Carolongian--Imperial idea remained in force, make the Papacy a principality which held its territory in opposition to the Imperial sovereignty. There was but one sovereign power until the emergence of the national kingdoms, and that was the Imperial-ecclesiastical power which acted as vicar of the Creator and Judge.

1. Spearing, _Patrimony in the Time of Gregory_, 1; L. Bréhier and R. Aigrain, _Grégoire le Grand, les États barbares, et la conquête arabe_ (1938), 542f.

not vast or their importance not considerable.[2] Nor is it to say
that the care taken by Gregory and his managerial acumen were not
remarkable. It is simply to affirm, first, that Gregory was not
an innovator simply because he managed the large land holdings
of the Church, and, second, that he in no way regarded himself
as a temporal prince by virtue of these properties.

On the other hand, the fact that the Church was a large
landholder was not without political significance. Against
Constantinople and the Lombards, it was important that Rome
could be fed with the fruits of the Sicilian Patrimony.[3] In
Gaul, Candidus, a presbyter, acted as rector and as papal ambas-
sador; he was to spend the income of the estates on charitable
and missionary endeavors in the North of Europe.[4] Defensors
and rectors were scattered throughout the Latin world as papal
land agents; Gregory innovated only in using them as visitors
and arbitrators in ecclesiastical affairs.[5]

The fact that Gregory did not regard himself as a sovereign
prince makes the fact of his assumption of an active role in
Italian politics even more difficult. Although it is impossible
to justify his action in a constitutional way, it is, I think,

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2. Dudden, Gregory the Great, I, 296ff, gives an idea of
their extent.

3. Epp. I. 2, 70; IX. 115.

4. Epp. VI. 5, 6. 10.

5. Epp. I, 67; III. 22, 35; VIII. 23; X. 4; IX. 120, 142.
(This is by no means an exhaustive list).

possible to understand it in terms of the political reality of life in Italy in the 590's and in terms of the doctrine of last things.

Gregory realized that he had become Pope at a crucial juncture. He made the significant remark in an early letter that, by divine retribution for his sins, he had become a Lombard and not a Roman bishop: "non Romanorum, sed Langobardorum episcopus factus sum."[6] The letters to Constantinople show that the sentence is to be taken as hyperbole; Gregory was still the first of the bishops of the Christian Roman Empire. But at the same time he realized that the destiny of Rome lay in the hands of the Arian tribesmen, sent by God to punish the sins of the Roman city. In a real sense, insofar as his office as metropolitan and Bishop of the City was concerned, he was in fact a bishop of the Lombards.

In one of the Homilies on Ezechiel, preached at the darkest hour of the Lombard crisis, Gregory speaks of the devastation of Italy and the depopulation and poverty of the City. Ezechiel predicted that Samaria would be destroyed; he prefigured, said Gregory, the destruction of Rome which he saw as an imminent reality and as punishment for Rome's sin. The mistress of the world has been reduced to nothing.[7] It is with a devastatingly

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6. Epp. I. 30.

7. "Ipse autem quae aliquando mundi domina esse videbatur qualis remanserit Roma conspicimus." Hom. in Ezech. II. VI. 22.

realistic sense of contemporary history that Gregory exegetes
Ezechiel's prophecy. Rome was set up as a pot and filled
with water and bones; over the fire it seethed with the lust for
power and glory. But Rome is no longer mistress: the dependent
nations, the Senate, the people are gone. The pot has boiled
dry. The empty pot is dissolving on the fire. No saviour from
Constantinople or Lombardy bothers to remove the pot from the
fire to preserve what is left.[8] Rome's only hope is that the
remnant, penitent and righteous, can preserve the city. The
situation is desperate and total doom is imminent. No outsiders
are interested--not the Exarch, not the Emperor, not the Arians.
It is not because he is a prince of the world--or because he has
derived or usurped from Constantinople the power to act--that
Gregory can negotiate with the Lombards. It is simply because
there is no one else left to act.

The history of Gregory's negotiations with the Lombards is
long and complicated, and can be dealt with only summarily here.
The Arian tribe had been governed by one Agilulf since the death
in 590 of Authari. Authari's widow, Theodelinda--a Catholic
although she was inclined to favor the anti-Constantinopolitan

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8. Hom. in Ezech. II. VI. 22-24. "Quia enim senatus deest,
populus interiit, et tamen in paucis qui sunt dolores et gemitus
quotidie multiplicantur, jam vacua ardet Roma. Quid autem ista
de hominibus dicimus, cum, ruinis crebrescentibus, ipsa quoque
destrui aedificia videmus. Unde apte de civitate jam vacua
subditur; Incalescat, et liquefiat aes eius. Jam enim et ipsa
olla consumitur, in qua prius et carnes et ossa consumebantur,
quia postquam defecerunt homines, etiam parietes cadunt. Ubi
autem sunt qui in ejus aliquando gloria laetabantur? Ubi eorum
pompa? Ubi superbia? Ubi frequens et immoderatum gaudium?"
Hom. in Evang. II. vi. 22. Dudden, Gregory the Great, II, ___
calls this "a weird funeral oration."

schismatics[9]--had determined the succession by taking Agilulf as her husband. Although the king was comparatively strong ruler, the tribe had never been noted for cohesiveness.[1] The powerful dukes of Spoleto and Benevento were likely at any time to undertake military expeditions without the support of the king. Moreover the Exarchs of Ravenna, with only small forces and little support from Constantinople, were not desirous of attempting to put down the invaders, who annually threatened the Imperial cities of central Italy.[2]

In 592, Gregory had already begun independent negotiations with the Arians. Ariulf of Spoleto had made a raid on the city inflicting considerable losses. The small military legion in Rome, long unpaid, could barely be urged to stand their guard, let alone risk their lives in defense of the City. Gregory urged John of Ravenna to remind the Exarch of his duty and hinted his intention to negotiate a peace with Ariulf despite the Imperial governor, if necessary.[3] Gregory evidently completed successfully several truces or treaties with the Lombards, paying the tribute money from the funds of his See. After the first truce, however, the Imperial forces broke Gregory's agree-

9. Epp. IV. 4, 33.

1. Dudden, Gregory the Great, I, 158ff; II. 3-7; Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 48-53.

2. Epp. II. 7, 32-34.

3. Epp. II. 45.

ment and withdrew the army from the city to the defense of
Perusia. Agilulf finally stormed Rome, taking captives for sale
as slaves.[4]

In 595 the crisis occurred. At the time of the delivery of
the Ezechiel homilies, Agilulf appeared at the city gates.
Ravenna was uninterested in the plight of the citizens, though
Agilulf was, Gregory assured the Exarch, willing to conclude a
peace if only the Romans will make some amends for the damages
incurred when the last truce was broken.[5] Gregory evidently met
the King himself and negotiated a treaty.[6]

The Emperor, informed by the Exarch of Gregory's high-handed
action, reprimanded the Pope, inspiring a famous and angry reply
from the prelate.[7] Gregory took offense at being called
simplicitatis, retorting that Maurice thereby implied he was
fatuus. He was outraged that Constantinople could sit back com-
placently, criticizing the bishop, while the Lombards, unchal-
lenged, ravaged Italy. The Papacy had at great expense and
after great suffering done the duty of the Empire; if Maurice
considered this a sin, Gregory preferred to rely on the mercy
of Jesus when he comes as Judge than to count on the justice of

4. Epp. V. 36.

5. Epp. V. 34.

6. Anon. Whitby monk, Vita Greg. XXIII; Paul Diac. Vita
Greg. XXVI. The details of these accounts are not reliable.

7. Epp. V. 36.

the Emperor.[8]

A new truce was negotiated in 598 by the Exarch Callintous; in this event Gregory's emissaries played an important role as arbitrators between the Romans and the Lombards.[9] This was a new role for Gregory but one which he seemed to find more agreeable to himself since he had finally aroused the proper officials to action. Callinicus broke the truce, however,[1] and it was not renewed until the advent of Phocas' Exarch, Smaragdus, in 603.[2] At Gregory's death, Theodelinda had given birth to a son who was baptized a Catholic;[3] it looked as though, in his reign, some settlement could finally be made.

In all this Lombard conflict, Gregory acted out of necessity. The proper authorities had failed to act; the bishops, then, had to take the initiative. Someone had to act to acquit Roman society of the duty to act righteously before the coming of the Judge; if governmental concern for the peace of the people could not move Maurice to act, then the pastoral concern of the bishop would have to suffice as justification for an innovation. Gregory did not intend or claim to usurp the government of Italy, or of

8. "Hoc tamen breviter dico, quoniam peccator et indignus plus de venientis Jesu misericordia, quam de vestrae pietatis iustitia praesumo." Epp. V. 36.

9. Epp. IX. 11. 44, 66. 67.

1. Paul Diac. Hist. Long. IV. 20, 23-25, 28.

2. Epp. XIII. 36.

3. Epp. XIV. 12.

any portion of the peninsula, from its rightful ruler--it might
have been a happier thing for Italy in the next two centuries
had he done so. He was, on the contrary, gratified when peace
was finally negotiated through proper channels. His action
probably saved Italy from complete Lombard domination and pre-
served for the fiction of Imperial overlordship its last basis
in fact. Gregory left Italy essentially as he found it. He
left only a precedent for Papal action when the Empire failed
to do its duty.

Gregory's relations with the Merovingian houses were closely
related to his efforts to institute reforms in the Gallican
Church. His only concern in writing the Franks was pastoral.
Thus it is correct to say with F. W. Kellett, against those who
see in the renewal of contact with Gaul an attempt to secure an
ally against Constantinople or the Lombards, that, in the
Merovingian correspondence, "we find no trace of what we may
call political motives."[4] Gregory was concerned simply to
make the Franks aware of their duty as Christian monarchs to
promote righteousness in the Church so that they might be pre-
pared themselves to face the Judge who was the source of their
authority.

Gregory's exhortations to the Merovingians are instructive
of his view of secular authority with regard to the Church.

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4. *Pope Gregory the Great and His Relations with Gaul*
(1889), 76.

Every letter begins with at least a sentence regarding the duty
of the Catholic monarch. Kingship, he tells Childebert, is an
exalted position, but to be a king is neither so unusual nor so
great as to be a Catholic king when there are kings nearby who
are not orthodox. Having this great gift, the Catholic ruler
must let his light shine before his subjects and before the
other nations.[5] The great gift of being a Catholic king is also
a heavy responsibility: it requires that the king acknowledge
who is his lord by perfecting his realm in order to please God.
So any laxity or corruption must be a source of distress.[6]
Gregory realized that strong action by the Merovingian rulers to
reform their Church would jeopardize their control of the kingdom
by increasing or fostering some autonomy in the Church. Simony
and the placement of royal lay candidates in episcopal office
were quite obviously to the advantage of the Merovingians.
Gregory faced this fact boldly, urging Brunhild to offer a sac-
rifice of her own authority to God by conquering the internal

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5. "Quanto ceteros homines regia dignitas antecedit, tanto
ceterarum gentium regwa regni vestri profecto culmen excellit.
Esse autem regem, quia sunt et alii, non mirum est, sed esse
catholicum, quod alii non merentur, hoc satis est. Sicut enim
magnae lampadis splendor in tetrae noctis obscuritate luminis
sui claritate fulgescit, ita fidei vestrae claritas inter
aliarum gentium obscuram perfidiam rutilat ac coruscat." Epp.
VI. 6.

6. "Cum regni vestri nomen inter cetera gratia olim
christianae religionis effulserit, valde studendum est, ut, unde
gloriosiores ceteris gentibus eminentis, inde omnipotenti Domino,
qui dat salutem reibus, perfectius placeatis et fidem quam
colitis adiutricem in omnibus habeatis." Epp. IX. 215.

enemy so that God might respond by conquering her foreign enemies: do God's work and he will do yours.[7] It is not enough just to rule as a Catholic over semi-barbarians;[8] the ruler must be thoroughly Christian even though to do so is seemingly foolish.

The small Petrine Patrimony in Gaul had evidently fallen under Frankish control by Gregory's time. The Pope reasserted his control over its management, sending a rector who also acted as his ambassador to the royal and episcopal courts, but ordering that the rents were to be expended in the North and not sent to Rome.[9] The rulers were obliged to assist the rector in restoring the full equities of the Roman See in its Gallican landholdings.[1]

Again and again, with great patience in view of the deafness of his addressees to his claims, Gregory set forth the duties of the Christian ruler to guard the purity of the Church. Although he may not have been aware of the true character of the Meroving- gians--their letters to him seem to have emphasized their Catholic zeal[2]--he was aware of the faults of the Frankish Church. Jews

7. "Facite quod Dei est, et Deus faciet quod vestrum . . . Sacrificium Deo devicto interiore hoste offerte, ut exteriores adversarios ipso adiuvante vincatis et, quale vos contra inimicos ipsius studium gesseritis, talem illum in vestro invamine senti- atis. Mihi autem credite, quia, sicut multorum iam experimento didicimus, in damno expenditur, quicquid,cum peccato congregatur. Si igitur vultis nil iniuste perdere, summopere studete de iniustitia nil habere. In terrenis etenim rebus semper causa damni est origo peccati." Epp. XI. 49.

8. Epp. XI. 49. ("efferta corda gentilium").

9. Epp. VI. 10.

1. Epp. VI. 5, 6.

2. Epp. V. 60; XI. 49; XIII. 7, etc.

were allowed to keep Christian slaves,[3] there were individual
grievances;[4] simony and the consecration of novices to the
episcopate were more the norm than the exception.[5] In all these
things Gregory constantly and insistently set forth the claims
of righteousness and the demand for reform. His dream of a
reforming synod,[6] however, was doomed because the Merovingians
profited more from the present system. Yet he did elicit some
assistance from the Franks for the English mission. He was thank-
ful for this evidence of charity, but said always that more evi-
dence of charity at home would be cause for greater thanksgiving.[7]

Gregory was given the opportunity to take an interest in
Gallican Church life and, because of his concern as the heir of
Peter to maintain the purity of the Church, seized every occasion
to set before the Merovingian monarchs the claims of Christ. He
realized that these claims were against the self-interest of the
rulers, but his faith in the certainty of historic retribution
forced him to preach continually his program of reform.

The time has come to evaluate Gregory's pastorate in terms
of our examination in this chapter and the preceeding one of

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3. _Epp_. IX. 215.

4. _Epp_. IX. 212, 226.

5. _Epp_. VIII. 4; IX. 215; XI. 49, 51, etc.

6. _Epp_. XI. 49, etc.

7. _Epp_. XI. 47, 48, 50, 51.

his doctrine and work. It is easy to overemphasize the fact that Gregory is a pivotal figure in the history of the Papacy, and yet this is, ironically, the most important thing about him. What is meant by this seemingly paradoxical statement is that Gregory the Great is a pivotal figure in the history of Western Christianity, but not in the same sense as historians have usually understood this fact.

Since Henri Pirenne's time, historians have been forced to reinterpret Gregory's work in terms of the Pirenne thesis--or in terms of the reevaluations of Western history the Belgian historian has forced on scholarship. Unfortunately, however, these reinterpretations have relied upon secondary studies of the Pope which were completed before the reevaluation of his period. So a recent historian,&St. L. B. Moss,[8] says that Gregory dealt with crises of the new order as they arose, and in terms of the thought patterns of the old:

> He is Janus-like figure. One aspect foreshadows
> (at least, to later eyes) the Papal domination of
> the West, the temporal power of the Church, the
> peculiar blend of legalism and mystic doctrine
> which characterizes medieval thought. The other
> aspect shows us the greatest of those Roman nobles
> turned bishop, who, in Gaul, Africa, or Italy,
> through the wreckage of the Empire led their retainers
> in a desperate fight against the swamping deluge of
> barbarian invasion, owing what success they gained
> less to the material forces at their command than to
> the unwilling respect accorded by their enemies to
> strength and nobility of character, and to the
> glamour of an ancient civilization.
>   As his epitaph proclaims him, Gregory is 'God's
> Consul'--a Roman statesman, last of his line.

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8. The Birth of the Middle Ages (1957), 137.

What Moss says is largely correct, but it depends upon an assumed
historical continuity in the Papacy in which St. Gregory is a
transitional figure between two periods. It is this assumption
of continuity which we must challenge; we may be able ultimately ✓
to affirm that Gregory had much to do with the character of the
medieval Papacy, but we must first disabuse ourselves of the
notion that his accomplishments were results of his political
and ecclesiastical achievements.

That Gregory's achievement as Pope vis à vis the other
Churches and the old and new civil powers was not so great as
was once thought is, it seems to me, the inevitable conclusion
of the survey of his work in these two chapters. Gregory was
forced to act by his Latin concept of the individual who finds
fulfillment in complete self-subjection to the needs and pur-
poses of the Church and of society. His compulsion to act was
heightened by his realistic interpretation of his own age as a
moment of crucial historic import, a last time, the last day of
Rome. We must accept the fact--however repulsive Gregory's
mythical imagery may have been to older historicans or to our-
selves--that the eschatology of the Gregorian Corpus, coupled ✓ ✱
with the sense of duty to act as revealed in the Epistles, moti-
vated everything he did. These elements are not late barbarisms
but the mainsprings of Latin thought in the tradition of Ambrose,
Jerome and Augustine,[9] expressed now by means of an imagery

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9. Gregory once advised an admirer that, rather than imbibe
the still water of his Ezechiel Homilies, he would profit more

which is sometimes barbarized.

It is this motivational element which gives the letters their strength--a strength from which it is easily concluded that this man must have made his mark on the Church. But scrupulous examination of Gregory's affairs reveals a failure which might have turned a weaker man in on himself.[1] His reform program simply did not coincide with the needs and desires of the other bishops, of the Emperor, of the barbarian kings. The bishops were forced to suffer corruption in the Church and to glorify their own positions in order to maintain what little power they had left against caesaropapal encroachments. The Emperor was too weak either to reconquer or to reform; he had to bow to the Church and yet to seek to control it by appointments in order to maintain support for his regime in the Church, which was--for all its faults--the last strong force in Roman society. The Frankish Monarchs and their bishops were for similar reasons not anxious to reform. Moreover it would appear that Gregory was one of few men left who saw the necessity of action and had a doctrine of purposeful history: history and action were not important in the

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by drinking of the profound torrents of Ambrose and Augustine. _Epp_. XII. 160.

1. It is remarkable to me that, in view of his failures, Gregory did not become a thorough-going mystic. But, although the eschatology faded in the middle years of the Pontificate, it revived again toward the end as strongly as ever. Hence Butler's study of Gregory as a mystic (_Western Mysticism_ /1951/) emphasizes an element in isolation which can, it seems to me, only be properly understood in the light of the continued emphasis on works in the world before the end.

East where historic institutions were seen as mere shadows of divine, spiritualized perfection; and Merovingian Gaul, to judge by the early appearance of decadence in the once strong house of Clovis, had no sense of historic purpose and no social dynamic.

What Gregory did was to make an impression on his age. All ears might seemingly be deaf to him but he persisted in acquitting himself of his duty to speak as chief pastor for reform. At least the ground did not fall from under the Church's feet. The Empire kept a foothold in Italy thanks to Gregory's firm policy with the Lombards. His voice made him a person with whom Constantinople had at least to reckon. His remonstrances presented claims of righteousness long-since forgotten in Gaul. The Roman Bishop's claim to supreme pastoral jurisdiction was stated clearly and widely so that few in places of influence did not know at least that Peter's successor claimed primacy.

Gregory accepted the old Imperial order as the basis of Western civilization, yet did not deny the importance of the new. He was Roman in motivation, Roman in orientation, and Roman in his historical realism.

The fact of Gregory's debt to the passing order and of his failure to achieve an immediate rapprochement with the new is manifested by the history of his successors to about the time of Gregory II.

In Italy affairs in the seventh century continued along the same lines as in the sixth; Gregory's temporary arrest of Roman decay--if it was even an arrest--had quite failed. The Lombard

tribe remained a weak and divided nation, capable, as it always had been of being defeated by an Imperial offensive of only moderate strength.[2] But the Lombards were never defeated nor did they consolidate their power. The years 626-652 saw an Arian-nationalist reaction to Romanization and catholicization. The latter forces triumphed finally, but the Popes were never recon-ciled with the Lombards--even with the great Liutprand (712-744), who was a zealous Catholic and a friend of the monks but wanted to unite Italy under his sceptre without the support of Rome--because of their political attachment to Ravenna and to Constantinople. Paul the Deacon, writing in the time of Charles the Great, ended his History of the Lombards with the death of Liutprand. Though he was a biographer of Pope Gregory I and a member of the Benedictine community at Monte Cassino, Paul reflected the lack of significance attached to the Papacy by the Lombards in this period. Of the thirty Popes from Benedict I (574) to Zacharias (d. 741) he recalled but twelve, and those--except for Benedict, Pelagius II and Gregory--only incidentally.[3]

Gregory's Lombard policy and his charities had evidently depleted the Papal treasury. There is evidence that under his successor, Sabinian, Papal activity was sharply curtailed and

2. This account of the Lombards depends largely on F. Lot, The End of the Ancient World and the Beginning of the Middle Ages (1931), 285-296.

3. See the edition of Hist. Long. by W. D. Foulke (1907). Paul's sources for Gregory in this work and in the Vita were largely English, although he also used the Papal archives or had access to the Corpus in a monastic library.

grain, formerly given the Roman citizenry, was sold at a high price.[4]
Honorius (625-628) was anathematized by the Sixth Ecumenical
Council for his support of the heretic Sergius of Constantinople.
In 692, an effort was made to Byzantinize the Latin liturgy.[5]
For thirty years after 685, the See of Peter was occupied by a
succession of Greek Popes. It looked as though, voluntarily or
involuntarily, Rome had succumbed to Constantinople. Unable to
come to terms with Lombardy, again out of contact with Merovingian
Gaul,[6] the Bishops of Rome were fast becoming puppets of a distant
and weak Caesaropapism.

In the first half of the eighth century the great Mediterranean
crisis occurred. In the century between the death of Mohammed and
the battle of Poitiers (732), the Empire of the Romans collapsed
before the Moslem onslaught--an unprecedented outbreak of Arab-
ianism which later consolidated its position by developing an
Arabian-Islamic culture.[7] This was no influx of a people sus-
ceptible of Romanization: law, language and religion made the
two orders at this stage absolutely incompatible.[8] That the
Arabs were checked at the gates of Constantinople and in Gaul

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4. Paul Diac. *Vita Gregorii*, xxix; Bréhier & Aigrain,
Grégoire le Grand, 392f.

5. Lot, *End of the Ancient World*, 299.

6. Kellett, *Gregory the Great*, 83ff.

7. P. Hitti, *The Arabs* (1956), 61.

8. H. Pirenne, *A History of Europe* (1955), 48ff.

redounds not so much to the credit of the Roman remnant as to the fact that the expansive energy of the Saracens had simply burned itself out.[9] Yet the arrest of the Arabs occurred only after the face of Europe had been utterly changed.

The reign of the Emperor Leo III, the Isaurian, (717-740), should have forced the Roman Bishops to regard themselves as no longer beholden to Constantinople. In 732, the Pope was deprived of Patriarchal authority in Illyricum, Sicily and Sardinia.[1] The weakness of the Popes is manifest in the fact that no great offense was taken at this action. But more important, Leo precipitated the Iconoclastic controversy.[2] Whatever the reasons for the policy of Leo, he was supported by the Platonic presuppositions of Eastern theology concerning the baseness of all things physical. That the West reacted so strongly as it did is not so much a credit to the Popes as it is a reflection of that Occidental realism which was unable to see any difficulty in the use of images in the Churches.[3] Finally, the fall of Ravenna in

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9. Hitti, The Arabs, 74.

1. Lot, End of the Ancient World, 301; Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 456f.

2. Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 430ff.

3. Gregory the Great himself had reacted violently against a proto-iconoclasm in Marseilles, Epp. IX. 208; XI. 10. He held, first, that the use of icons in churches had never before been challenged, and, second, that images were useful for the edification of the illiterate. He did not, however, admit the adoration of images.

751 and the end of the Exarchate left the Popes with the necessity
of defeating or capitulating to the Lombards.[4]

Meanwhile in Gaul, the weak Merovingian monarchy had lost its
power to the Mayors of the Palace of the house of Pepin of Heristal.
When Pepin's son Charles Martel had checked the Arabs at Poitiers
in 732, the Carolingians appeared as the new force for France.[5]
But as yet they had no more sense of destiny and no more purpose
to build civilization anew than had the Merovingians, who yet
held nominal sway over the Franks.

The middle of the eighth century saw Europe without an Empire
and apparently without forces dynamic enough to rebuild Christian
civilization. The last stand of Rome in the person of Gregory
the Great had been too weak to save the West from disaster. Yet
the second half of the same century saw Western forces consoli-
dating and rebuilding with a dynamic which was strikingly
Gregorian. The conventional approach to the rebirth of this
dynamic is that it occurred by means of the Carolingians and the
Papacy. The House of Pepin is said to have arisen to meet the
crisis in the north. The Papacy is said, almost mystically, to
have retained its self-consciousness and to have revived its
dynamic motivation under pressure of the crisis in an effort to
revive the Empire.[6] But we have seen that the spirit of Gregory

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4. Lot, End of the Ancient World, 307f.

5. Pirenne, History of Europe, 74; Hitti, The Arabs, 92.

6. So T. Jalland, The Church and the Papacy (1949), 362ff.

was bankrupt and that the Franks as yet had no sense of destiny.
We will have to look elsewhere for the survival of the old Roman
Christian dynamism which characterized the later history of the
West. And when we find the force we will see that it derived
from Gregory's only work outside the structure of Imperial Rome.
The Empire of Charles the Great did not rise like the phoenix
from the ashes of Roman society, it was a revival of the
Gregorian-Latin spirit from the seed planted by the Pope in Saxon
England.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH AND THE MONASTIC MOVEMENT

Before we can outline the monastic doctrine and policy of
Gregory the Great, it is necessary to indulge in rather more his-
torical introduction than has been our custom in these chapters.
The history of Western monasticism affords a plethora of documen-
tation which is exceptionally difficult to interpret. The ques-
tion of influence has been muddled by interpreters who have taken
no account of the social, political, and economic situation of
the West in the fifth through the ninth centuries, and the under-
standable piety of some monastic scholars with regard to their
founding fathers has led them to read later trends into the early
period. Thus, since St. Gregory's position in the monastic
development is a pivotal one, we must attempt at least a tentative
reconstruction of what preceded him.

The ascetic movement, properly so-called, began around the
time of the recognition of Christianity. Its sources were
Eastern, probably originally Egyptian. The movement spread
rapidly in the Orient in two forms: the eremitic or solitary,
which tended to extreme acts of self-mortification and to dis-
regard of the practices and discipline of the Catholic Church;
and the coenobitic or communal, which was more or less controlled
and ordered but tended even so to hold in contempt the discip-
linary authority of the episcopate. Although as time passed
coenobitic asceticism came more and more to the fore, there was

a persistent tendency in the East--easily understandable in the light of the presuppositions of Greek Christianity--to revert to individualism and to extreme austerity.[1]

Ascetism appeared first in the West in Gaul by about 350, and was probably first significantly introduced in Italy by St. Jerome in 382. Although it is popular to distinguish tendencies to eremitism or to coenobitism in the early history of monasticism in the Occident, it seems likely that the first Latin ascetics took inspiration from both Eastern tendencies and did not themselves distinguish the movements in any coherent way. Thus the life of Martin of Tours which is modeled on that of Anthony of Egypt tells without embarrassment of the solitary and communal periods of the life of the first Gallican ascetic, and even of his activities as bishop of Tours. Sulplicius Severus' biography of Martin indicates as well that the severance with the world practiced in the West was not so final and complete as that of Egypt, or even of Cappadocia. There is at any rate a more persistent tendency in the West towards some moderation and some form of communal life.

The great ascetic theologian of the West, John Cassian, sought to reconstruct the spirituality of Origen as he read the Greek father in the translation of Evagrius.[2] But, true to the Latin temperament, he emphasized the element of human respon-

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1. C. Butler, Lausiac History of Palladius (1898), 238-245.

2. O. Cadwick, John Cassian (1950), 36.

sibility in the attainment of the ascetic goal,[3] thus precipating the long and bitter "semi-Pelagian" controversy in Gaul. But, despite the controversy he aroused, Cassian did much to fix the tone and the language of later Latin monasticism. His influence, spurred by the popularity of the monks at Lerins and the example of St. Martin of Tours, spread rather widely during the fifth century. Gregory of Tours testifies that monasticism was widespread in Gaul, though without organization and continuity, by the time of Gregory the Great.

The movement after Jerome had little official or ecclesiastical support in Italy, although it grew steadily and finally overcame most of the opposition. Augustine had lived at Hippo Regius in community with a _familia_ of monks, thus giving the monastic movement some respectability in Latin eyes. There was no standard Rule followed anywhere in the West; the movement varied from house to house being here individualistic and ascetic and there fairly communal. The Rules of Basil and Pachomius circulated widely and were combined with the writings of Cassian,

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3. _Ibid._, 121. Chadwick holds that although Cassian was aware that God is both "the goal and the way to the goal", he had not, like Augustine, "succeeded in bringing to the surface any fully adequate expression of it in language, and his moral exhortations always stressed the destination more than the aid of God on the journey." (p. 138) This may be so, but he set the form for later emphasis in the West on works-righteousness. The important thing to note is that Cassian's doctrine was his Latin reading of Eastern monastic sources, and not the doctrine enunciated by the Oriental ascetics; see P. de Labriolle, _Histoire de la Littérature Latine Chrétienne_ (3ᵈ Edn., Rev. by G. Bardy, 1947), 647.

Jerome and others to form new rules.[4]

By the beginning of the sixth century it is, I think, fair to say that some headway had been made toward an adaptation of the monastic idea to the Western climate and intellect, but that there was by no means any unity in the movement. There was a general Western monastic tradition, common in many of its aspects to Gaul and to Italy, which was no more than the Eastern tradition as re-read by the Latin mentality. There were local codifications and uses dependent on common Greek and Latin sources, which sometimes strikingly resembled each other; there was a tendency to community life and to moderation which was yet caught in the tension between eremitism and coenobitism. But there was no centralized motivation or direction.

It is the usual view that St. Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-550) appeared at this time on the scene and produced a Regula so peculiarly well adapted to the needs of the West that it was rapidly and widely accepted throughout Latin Christendom.[5] There are however, two considerations which militate strongly against such an historical assumption and which must be considered here

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4. Butler, Lausiac History, 249; J. R. Palanque, et al. De la Paix Constantinienne à la Mort de Théodose (1950), 327-70. An excellent tabular chronology with bibliography of ancient monasticism appears in the latter volume at pp. 321ff.

5. So Abbot Chapman states the Rule was intended for the whole church and influenced not only Caesarius of Arles and Cassiodorus, but also the Code of Justinian. St. Benedict and the Sixth Century (1929), Chs. 2-6.

in some detail. They are the problem of evidence for the life of Benedict and the problem of the identification of his Rule.

The only source for the life of Benedict of Nursia is the second book of the Dialogues of Gregory the Great (593).[6] Benedict lived, according to Gregory, in the earlier part of the sixth century: the only clue to a fixed date is the visit paid him by Totilla the Ostrogoth in about 542.[7] Since Gregory seems to have been rather careful in his screening of oral sources for the Dialogues,[8] we can assume that what he tells us represents the best oral tradition of the monastic saint's life. The immediate sources, we are told, are Constantine, his successor as abbot; Velentinian, superior of the Lateran monastery whence the Benedictines had migrated after the destruction of Monte Cassino; Simplicius, Benedict's second successor; and Honoratus, Abbot of Subiaco where Benedict first lived as a hermit.[9]

But more has been claimed for this little biography than is claimed by the author himself. It is asserted that it gives evidence of a wide contemporary fame for Benedict, but Gregory says in his general preface that the lives and miracles of the Italian saints were generally unknown.[1] Even where Gregory noted

6. Ibid., V.

7. C. Butler, Benedictine Monachism (1919), 1.

8. Epp. III. 50.

9. Greg I, Dial. II, Praef.

1. Dial. I. Praef, where Peter says, "Non valde in Italia

the contemporary celebrity of his subject, he was speaking only of a localized phenomenon.[2] Gregory devoted so great a portion of the Dialogues to Benedict precisely because, outside a fairly small circle, he was unknown by the last decade of the sixth century. From the internal evidence, it appears that Benedict's fame during his own lifetime was not more than local.

It is also commonly claimed that the second book of the Dialogues of Gregory shows something of Gregory's intense interest in the propagation of the Benedictine Regula. Again we must point to the avowed intent of the author which was, simply, to familiarize the Roman clergy with the miracles of Italian saints.[3] Further, although some incidental information about Benedict's monastic practice and Rule is given from which we can discern the general outline of the known Rule, no zeal whatever for use of the Rule to standardize ascetic practice is displayed. Indeed, the only notice that Benedict produced a Rule is a statement that the character of the Saint can be discerned from the purity of his disciplinary document.[4] The document was evidently available

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aliquorum vitam virtutibus falisse cognovi; ex quorum igitur comparatione accenderis ignoro. Et quidem bonos viros in hac terra fuisse non dubito, signa tamen atque virtutes aut ab eis nequaquam facta existimo, aut ita sunt hactenus silentio suppressa, ut utrumne sint facta nesciamus."

2. Dial..II. 3. Benedict's influence is said to have spread from Subiaco to Rome, which is not a terribly great distance. The visit of Totilla (Dial. II. 14-15) is also attributable to local notoriety rather than to wide fame.

3. Epp. III. 50; Dial. I. 50.

4. "Libeft, Petre, adhuc de hoc venerabili Patre multa

in Rome for Peter the Deacon to read, but it seems not to have been widely known.

We need say little more specifically about the life of Benedict. He was an ascetic with some local following in the area of Italy along the coast between Rome and Naples who flourished in the first half of the sixth century. He seems to have established three houses, notably Monte Cassino, and to have undertaken the reform of others.[5] By the end of the century, his memory was celebrated only at Subiaco and in Rome, whence the Cassinese monks had migrated. Benedict produced a Rule which was available in Rome about 593, but which had no more authority than any other of the myriad such documents then in circulation in the Latin Church.

The second problem, that of identifying the Rule of St. Benedict, is an extremely difficult one which is capable at the present moment of no final conclusion. We can hope here only to indicate something of the enigma which faces Benedictine scholarship. The abbey at Monte Cassino was destroyed in the ninth decade of the sixth century and the monks migrated to Rome where,

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narrare; sed quaedam ejus studiose praetereo, quia ad aliorum gesta evolvenda festino. Hoc autem nolo te lateat, quod vir Dei inter tot miracula quibus in mundo claruit, doctrinae quoque verbo non mediocriter fulsit. Nam scriptsit monarchorum regulam, discretione praecipuam, sermone luculentam. Cujus si quis velit subtilius mores vitamque cognoscere, potest in eadem institutione regulae omnes magisterii illius actus invenire: quia sanctus vir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam vixit." Dial. II. 36.

5. Butler, Benedictine Monachism, 354.

according to legend, they set up a house near the Lateran.[6]
Gregory's testimony with regard to the availability of the Rule
assures us that they brought with them the Institutes of the
founder.

In 717, Petronax of Brescia re-established the foundation
at Monte Cassino, and in 750 Pope Zacharias sent a Rule—often
taken to have been the autograph of Benedict—to this house.
Paul the Deacon, author of the Lombard history and a commentary
on the Rule, seems to indicate that the new Cassinese foundation
was a fresh start without any Benedictine continuity, and that
the Rule supplied by Zachary was from the Papal, and not the
Lateran Monastery, library.[7] That the customs of this house were
not in accord with the Benedictine tradition which was observed
by the Saxons is testified by the reforms instituted by the English
Benedictine, Willibald, about 727.[8] It is not known, indeed it
is doubtful, if Willibald substituted a new text for that of
Zachary or if he simply restored discipline according to English
custom.

The most widely accepted text tradition of the Regula of St.
Benedict derives in its earliest extant form from the use of
Cassino; it was transmitted to the Carolingian reformers and

6. Ibid.; D. Knowles, The Monastic Order in England (1940), 17.

7. Butler, Benedictine Monachism, 172f.

8. Ibid., 355-6; Huneberc of Heidenheim, The Hodoeporicon
of St. Willibald, in C. H. Talbot, trans., Anglo-Saxon Mission-
aries (1954), 172-173.

retained in a manuscript at the Monastery of St. Gall.[9] Another
textual tradition, which was evidently that in use in England,
France and elsewhere in the seventh and eighth centuries and may
represent a still better textual tradition, also exists, and there
is a combination of these two traditions—a _textus receptus_—from
the tenth century.[1] There is, then, in the manuscript tradition
of the Rule no text antedating the ninth century,[2] and no text
which can claim clear and direct descent from the Benedictine
autograph.

Recently, Dom Augustin Genestout, has put forth the hypothesis
that a Rule, known as the _Regula Magistri_ and formerly considered
a derivative of the Benedictine, was the primary source for the
Benedictine Rule.[3] This Rule, longer than the Benedictine, con-
tains many sections strikingly, even literally, like the latter.
Only the last seven chapters of Benedict's Rule dealing with
internal discipline appear not to be related to the Master's Rule.
Vanderhoven has edited the _Regula Magistri_ and dated the two ex-
tant manuscripts about 600.[4] There seems to be good reason to

9. Butler, _Benedictine Monachism_, 171ff. The Cassino ms.
has been destroyed.

1. _Ibid._, 170ff; J. McCann, _The Rule of St. Benedict_ (1952),
xii-xvii.

2. P. de Labriolle et al, _Théodose à Grégoire le Grand_,
543, n. 4.

3. The best bibliographical histories of the debate discussed
below are to be found in Chadwick, _John Cassian_, 169n.; and B.
Altaner, _Patrologie_ (5th Edn, 1958), 446f.

4. H. Vanderhoven et al., _La Règle du Maître_ (1953), 59.

think this Rule originated in Italy about 500, and that it was a
source for the Rule of the Benedictines.[5] Although it is imposs-
ible to draw any final conclusions at this time, one looks for-
ward to the termination of the debate.[6] Meanwhile, we have evi-
dence of the contemporaneity of a Rule with Gregory I which is
strikingly like the traditional Benedictine Rule, and we have in
these documents evidence of an early manuscript tradition.[7]

Dom David Knowles, speaking of the critical impasse and
looking over Benedictine scholarship from Abbot Butler to the
present, concludes that

> The disappearance of Benedict as the author (as
> distinct from the compiler) of /the Regula Benedicti7
> would indeed be little more than the final stage in
> the long critical process which has changed the
> picture of a vast institute deriving from the pat-
> riarch of Monte Cassino into one of a code and its
> spiritual doctrine gradually 'infecting' an already
> existing multitude of religious foundations.[8]

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5. A. Genestout, "Unité de Composition de la Règle de S.
Benoît et de la Règle du Maître d'après leur mainère d'introduire
les citations de L'Écriture", Studia Anselmia 18-19 (1947), 270-
272; T. Pays, "Der Magistertext in der Überlieferungsgeschichte
der Benediktinerregel," Studia Anselmiana 44 (1959), 83-4. An
example of the opposing literature is B. Capelle, "Le Maître
anterieur à S. Benoît?" Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique XLI, 66-75.

6. Vanderhoven and his associates have announced a second
volume, Gènese de La Règle des Monastères which will presumably
bring us closer to a settlement.

7. McCann, Rule of St. Benedict, xix-xxi, while rejecting
the Genestout thesis grants this much value to the Regula
Magistri.

8. Review of Vanderhoven, La Règle du Maître, in Journal
of Ecclesiastical History, VI (1955), 95.

Dr. Knowles need not restrict this statement to the eventuality that the Rule of the Master may be shown to be Benedict's source. From our present knowledge we can state quite confidently that such is the case. Benedict was an unknown at the end of his century; if he had a cult to aid his later fame he owes the existence of that cult to his prominence in the Gregorian _Dialogues_.[9] If he wrote the _Regula Benedicti_--that is if this document is a descendent of what he wrote--he drew widely from the Latin monastic tradition.[1] The _Regula Magistri_, whatever its source and date and relation to Benedict, relies on the same tradition. But Gregory testifies that neither Rule had much influence before 600. Benedict was but one of many writers of Rules in a period which also produced a Cassiodorus, a Caesarius and, slightly later, a Columbanus. The important thing for the historian, if he is to see the real development of the monastic tradition and to avoid reading between the lines of hagiography, is to look for the developments which effected the 'infection' of the West with a monastic code and gave formal unity and direction to a movement which had already a unity of spirit and of outlook.

If we look to the writings of Gregory the Great, we can see

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9. Hence P. Batiffol can say that "Book II of the _Dialogues_ made of Saint Benedict the patriarch of the Monks of the West." _Saint Gregory the Great_ (1929), 190.

1. See the "Index Scriptorum", pp. 176ff, of Butler, ed., _Sancti Benedicti Regula_ (1912).

the beginning of the spread of the 'Benedictine' code throughout the Latin World.

If Gregory the Great regarded the Church as a vessel driven through the wild and turbulent sea of sixth century affairs,[2] and his own life as pontiff as one afflicted by storms,[3] he regarded the monastic movement and the life of the ascetic as the one source of quiet and tranquillity for the Christian who desired some respite from the tumult of the last days of history. His constant references to his years as a simple monk reflect a real sense of loss and a feeling that he cannot now be the kind of man or live the kind of life he regards as being purest and most worthy.[4]

Yet his Latin spirit and his own experience make inevitable an inconsistency in his statement of the monastic ideal. His reference to his conversion--i.e. his decision to make a monastic profession--in the dedicatory Epistle to the Moralia is a typical Gregorian statement of the aims of monastic life. After resisting the implication of his conversion experience until he realized his only tie to the world was in his own mind, Gregory states that he finally sought out the monastery to avoid the misery of the world. The ship-storm imagery is evoked to describe the experience.

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2. See above Chap. II, Epp. I. 4.

3. Epp. I. 7.

4. See the first pontifical letters, Epp. I. 1-7.

The monastery is the _portus_ whence one repairs to escape the
storms of mundane life--"ex huius vitae naufragio nudus evasi".[5]
The calls, to Constantinople and to the Roman episcopate, which
as loyal churchman he had obediently to accept, were calls to
venture again on the stormy sea, and both journeys were occasions
of distress.

> Quia enim plerumque navem incaute religatam etiam de
> sinu tutissimi litoris unda excutit, cum tempestas
> excrescit, repente me sub praetextu ecclesiastici
> ordinis in causarum saecularium pelago repperi et
> quietem monasterii, quia habendo non fortiter tenui,
> quam stricte tendenda fuerit, perdendo cognovi. Nam
> cum mihi ad percipiendum sacri altaris ministerium
> oboedientiae virtus opponitur, hoc sub ecclesiae
> colore susceptum est, quod si inulte liceat, iterum
> fugiendo deflectatur. Postque hoc nolenti mihi
> atque renitenti, cum grave esset altaris ministerium,
> etiam pondus est curae pastoralis iniunctum. Quod
> tanto nunc durius tolero, quanto me ei imparem
> sentiens in nulla fiduciae consolatione respiro.[6]

Duty in the Church is simply duty; it is not that to which one
aspires, for the goal of the Christian is the peace of the harbor.
It is only because Gregory is so thoroughly Latin that his duty
to the Church must outweigh the desires of his own heart. He
must take orders, must go to Constantinople, must rule the See
of St. Peter. The sanction for this heavy duty, and at the same
time the reason for its existence, is the eschatological urgency
of the age: the times are so bad that even the monk cannot escape
the evil of the world. The monk must act precisely because the

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5. _Epp._ V. 53a, 81.

6. _Ibid._

end is at hand: "Quis enim mundi iam tempora malis crebrescentibus termino propinquante turbata sunt, ipsa nos, qui interius mysteriis deservire credimur, curus exterioribus implicamur. . ."[7] Even so, he has kept about him a group of monks so that he might not lose all contact with monastic tranquility.[8]

The passage we have been examining is not an isolated one. It only epitomizes a theme which runs throughout Gregory's works.[9] In these last days, the monastic life is the only haven from the storm of the world; he who leaves the cloister cannot hope for peace. And yet, precisely because these are the last days, the monk must serve the Church in the world.

The basic contradiction between the ideas of monastery and of church pervades Gregory's writing. This same inconsistency had caused no little disciplinary trouble in the East; in the West it was seen by the opponents of monasticism as a conflict between personal desire and corporate duty. Gregory, however, is unaware of the political implications of this basic conflict. He tells how Florentius drove Benedict from Subiaco because of the envy of the priest of the number of monastic conversions inspired by the abbot.[1] But he is evidently unaware of the real issue between parish and monastery. He relates a curious tale of one Equitius,

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid. The only reference here is to the monks of St. Andrew's who accompanied him to Constantinople; one must however assume Gregory was in continual contact with monastics in Rome during his pontificate.

9. The Epp. are too numerous to need citation; see also Dial. I. Praef., where the sea image recurs, and Regula Pastoralis, I. Praef.

1. Dial. II. 8.

a monk who preached although he was not in orders. The Bishop of
Rome, at the instigation of his envious clergy, proposed to inves-
tigate this breach of discipline, but, frightened in a dream, the
Pope cancelled the inquiry. Gregory concludes that God protects
his faithful against those who seek the glory of the world.[2] He
does not see the disciplinary problem or the breach of monastic
vows implied in this evangelical activity.

There is, in other words, a kind of ambivalence in Gregory's
monastic doctrine. He saw the monastery as the only refuge and
at the same time he seemed to encourage evangelical and ecclesi-
astical activity on the part of the monk. The basic tension of
his own career was, so to speak, projected into his view of
monasticism. It is not unlikely that his Rule prohibited this
double activity, but Gregory either ignored, or was unable to see,
the proscription.

Such is, in a general way, Gregory's view of monasticism.
One must, however, inquire what was more explicitly the kind of
monasticism he espoused and what steps he took to propagate this
kind of monasticism.

It is generally assumed that Gregorian monasticism is equi-
valent to Benedictine monasticism;[3] that is to say that, on the

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2. _Dial_. I. 4.

3. Butler, _Benedictine Monachism_, 160-161. O. M. Porcel,
La Doctrina Monástica de San Gregorio Magno y la "Regula
Monachorum." (1951), finds that Gregory depends solely and liter-
ally on Benedict. (pp. 214f.)

basis of the interest expressed in _Dialogues_ _II_ in St. Benedict, it is assumed that the Rule now called Benedictine is the Rule written by the patriarch of Monte Cassino. We have seen that the Rule referred to by Gregory as having been written by Benedict and as being available in Rome is not properly identifiable. But there is little doubt that a Rule like that called the Benedictine is the one employed and propagated by Pope Gregory. Whether this Rule was the _Regula_ _Magistri_, the _Regula_ _Benedicti_ or some other of the numerous similar Western Regulae is not, I think, demonstrable. Literary similarities and formal likenesses are so great among the Rules that they do not make conclusive evidence. On the other hand, it would be foolish to deny categorically that the 'Benedictine' Rule was that used and circulated by Gregory; its subsequent history is too closely linked with the history of Gregory and his influence to allow such a statement. The closest we can come to definite statement is that the _Regula_ of Gregory was of the family of the 'Benedictine' and the Master's Rules and that it has since the time of Gregory been popularly associated with the name of Benedict of Nursia. It is not necessary to attempt here a catalogue of the characteristics of Gregory's monasticism **vis à vis** the 'Benedictine'[4]   .

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4. See Porcel, _Doctrine_ _Monástica_, _passim_, and Dudden, _Gregory_ _the_ _Great_, II, 161-200. R. Gillet in his Introduction to Gregoire le Grand, _Morales_ _Sur_ _Job_ (_Sources_ _Chrétiennes_, #32, pp. 82ff shows that Gregory's ascetic work, the _Moralia_, relies on the same sources as the majority of Latin monastic writings: primarily Cassian, but also Augustine and Ambrose.

since it has often enough been demonstrated that there is either
striking similarity or absolute identity.

It must be noted, however, that there were current in Rome
two non-Benedictine types of monasticism which doubtless had
influenced the houses known by Gregory himself. The first was
the liturgical _familia_ at the great Roman basilicas whose members
served as the choirs of the great churches, rather as regular
canons were later to function.[5] The second type derived from
Cassiodorus and emphasized the scholarly work of the monks;
Gregory's _Moralia in Job_, begun in Constantinople, probably
received some impetus from the work of the first Italian monastic
scholar.[6] Although these elements are not directly traceable
in the work of Gregory, they are discernable in the monasticism
of Augustine of Canterbury and in later Italian asceticism.

Gregory undertook no systematic reform of Western monasticism.
He did, however, write on numerous occasions to abbots and bishops
giving advice or mandates to correct laxities and abuses. His
ideas of monastic discipline as set forth in the letters are,
then, occasional and not systematic. There are, however, several
points which are stressed in these letters which indicate both
the prevalent abuses and the ideas of Gregory.

There was, for instance, incessant combat between the diocesan

5. D. Knowles, _The Monastic Order in England_ (1940), 17.

6. _Ibid._; Dudden, _Gregory the Great_, II, 169ff.

and the abbot. Gregory had to order the bishops more than once not to distrub the tranquility of the houses by use of the chapel for public masses and other public functions.[7] At the same time, the Bishop had to see that priests were provided to say Mass for the monks if no member of the house was in orders.[8] The abbot was to be chosen internally, but to be installed by the bishop.[9] The bishop was responsible for visiting the monasteries to see that all was in order.[1] Generally one can say, with Dudden,[2] that the bishop retained a jurisdiction over the spiritual well-being of the house under the terms of the Regulae, but that the house remained autonomous in so far as selection of the abbot and management of revenue and property were concerned. Gregory was concerned to maintain the monastery as a port in the stormy world: stable, self-sufficient and secure.

In so doing he, however, stressed the privileges of the foundations in such a way as to keep the door open for future assertions of monastic independence. So, for example, he allowed the abbot direct communication with Rome,[3] although he preferred local settlement of disputes.[4] Such provisions tended to make

7. Epp. VII. 12; VIII. 17; XIII. 11, 12, 13.

8. Epp. VII. 43.

9. Epp. V. 47; VII. 12; IX, 20.

1. Epp. VI, 11; VII. 12; VIII. 8, 17, 32; IX. 203, 224; X. 3, 9; XIV. 16.

2. Gregory the Great, II, 188.

3. Epp. VIII. 17.

4. Ibid., and Epp. VII. 32; XIV. 6.

later monastics look to Rome for assistance, although there is
no indication that Gregory intended to break the established
hierarchical custom of appellate jurisdiction. Exceptional
grants of privilege, as that to Respecta at Marseilles,[5] did
not depart in their prescriptions from the general tradition,
but they did open the door for later monastic loyalty to Rome.[6]

It is not in a systematic reform of monasticism that the
significant claim of Gregory to a place in later monastic history
lies. There is every indication that the reforms he attempted
met the same fate as his attempts to deal with Churches outside
Rome and with the secular rulers. Nor does he show any desire
to impose upon the rest the Rule of Benedict or any other par-
ticular monastic code. It is, rather, in his recognition of
the fact that under the eschatological stress of the age the
monks must be mobilized to preach the Gospel in foreign parts
and to serve the Church, as he himself served it--as bishops
and as diplomats--that Gregory influenced the future of the
monastic order.

Aside from the mission to England, the secular employment
of monks is somewhat limited. Gregory did, however, feel that,

5. Epp. VII. 12; XII. 9. See F. W. Kellett, Pope Gregory
the Great (1889), 48f. This grant follows a tradition dating
from the time of Caesarius of Arles (Labriolle, et al, Mort de
Théodose, 411) and it is contemplated that the Caesarian rule
will be followed.

6. The question of the monks and the state has been dis-
cussed above, Chap. III.

where parishes were vacant and priests could be obtained, monks should be ordained with the permission of their Abbot.[7] Several bishops who had originally been monks were elevated by the monk-Pope.[8] These extraordinary measures were required by the world situation, and were to be deplored as was his own return to the world.[9]

The great occasion on which Gregory drew from the monasteries, incidentally furthering the cause of monasticism, was the commission of the mission to the English to a group of monks from St. Andrew's under one Augustine. Gregory himself tells us little or nothing about the monastic connections of the mission except that Augustine and his followers were members of the congregation of St. Andrew's.[1] Augustine, who had been praepositus at the house in Clivus Scauri,[2] was made abbot of the little group en route to England, evidently in order that he might have greater disciplinary authority over his fellows.[3]

7. Epp. I. 18; VIII. 17.

8. Maximianus of Syracuse, Augustine of Canterbury, Marianus of Ravenna. See Dudden, Gregory the Great, II, 192.

9. Epp. V. 53a.

1. Epp. VIII. 29; IX. 222.

2. Epp. VI. 50a; IX. 222.

3. "Remeanti autem Augustino praeposito vestro, quem et abbatem vobis constituimus, in omnibus humiliter oboedite scientes hoc vestris animabus per omnia profuturum, quicquid a vobis fuerit in eius ammonitione completum." Epp. VI. 50a.

Gregory reports Augustine's subsequent elevation to the epis-
copacy without settling the question of the effect of the event
on his position in the monastery.[4] This group was later rein-
forced by another body of monks, including Laurentius, a priest,
and Mellitus, an abbot,[5] both of whom eventually became bishops.

The Pope evidently justified his action on the ground of
the necessity of taking drastic action in an age which threatened
disaster. The letter to the recalcitrant monks when they sought
permission to return to Rome urges them to act boldly in hope
of eternal reward.[6] But he left little written record of the
exact monastic Rule they were to follow in this unusual situ-
ation. In reply to Augustine's question as to how the bishop
and his clergy were to live, he simply commends to them the
communalism of the Book of the Acts and notes that Augustine,
subject to monastic vows, must continue to live with his monks
under a Rule.[7] The same letter commends whatever liturgical

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4. _Epp._ VIII. 29. The consecration was authorized from Rome:
"Qui data a me licentia a Germaniarum episcopis episcopus factus
. . ."

5. _Epp._ XI. 34, 39-50.

6. "Nec labor vos ergo itineris nec maledicorum hominum
linquae deterreant sed omni instantia omnique fervore quae
inchoastis Deo auctore peragite scientes, quod laborum magnum
maior aeternae retributionis gloria sequitur." _Epp._ VI. 50a.

7. _Epp._ XI. 56a, 1 (See below, Chap. V, concerning the
authenticity of this ep.); _H. E._ I. 26. The emphasis on primitive,
Apostolic life is further evidence that Gregory had no particular
interest in propagating the _Regula Benedicti_.

use Augustine sees fit to adopt, and the implication seems to be
that this man 'learned in the monastic Rule'[8] knows best how to
arrange his life. He is given only the outline of a Rule stress-
ing poverty, hospitality, mercy, discipline, and the reading of
the offices.[9] It seems certain that the institution of an epis-
copal monastery is more an expedient--or perhaps even an imitation
of Gregory's Rome or Augustine's Hippo--than an adaptation of the
Celtic custom. Gregory's intention was that Augustine should
follow his old rule with such adaptations as local conditions
and the urgency of the mission required. Bede adds only that a
house was founded at Canterbury by Augustine, endowed by the king
and completed by Laurentius.[1]

We can only hope to outline here the effects on the later
Church of Gregory's monastic work. Much of what one must conclude
here is implicitly a part of the story of the motives and achieve-
ments of the mission to England. This much, however, is clear:
Gregory's Dialogues were in large part responsible for the

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8. Epp. XI. 37.

9. Epp. XI. 56a. "De eorum quoque stipendio cogitandum atque
providendum est, et sub ecclesiastica regula sunt tenendi, ut bonis
moribus vivant et canendis psalmis invigelent et ab omnibus
inlicitis cor et linguam et corpus Deo auctore conservent. Communi
autem vita viventibus iam de faciendis portionibus vel exhibenda
hospitalitate et adimplenda misericordia nobis quid erit loquen-
dum. . ." Epp. XI. 56a.

1. H. E. I. 33. The house was first ruled by one Peter, a
priest.

ultimate triumph of the Benedictine Rule since they drew atten-
tion to the life and miracles of the Abbot of Monte Cassino
and gave impetus to a Benedictine cult.[2] Although we cannot
identify the Benedictine _Regula_ with any certainty, it is undeni-
able that the Rule used by Gregory and Augustine is essentially
that now known as the Benedictine.

It is spread of this Benedictinism in the seventh and
eighth centuries that interests us now. Gregory did not attempt
to enforce wide use of the Rule in the Church. He rose to cer-
tain occasions to institute reforms; his interest gave some
currency to such 'Benedictine' concepts as stability; he helped
to strengthen the monasteries against diocesan encroachments,
and fostered the idea that Rome was the special pastor of the
monks. But in all this his contemporary influence was probably
restricted to Rome, to parts of central Italy, and to Sicily
and some of the islands. It is easy to see an attempt to
establish Benedictinism from reading the Letters and, in retro-
spect, to assume that it had some effect. But ~~in~~ closer reading
shows that such was neither the intent nor the immediate effect
of St. Gregory's work.

What then can we say of the English monks? It seems that
there is no other source for the spread of Benedictine monas-

2. Bede, _Historia Abbatum_, 1, (C. Plummer ed. _Baedae Opera
Historica_ /189$\underline{6}$/, I, 364ff) quotes _Dial._ II. 1. To describe the
virtues of the Italian's namesake, Benedict Biscop, and at _Ibid._,
16, shows that Benedict of Nursia is accepted generally as the
author of the standard Rule.

ticism in the following centuries. If Gregory did not attempt
to spread the rule in Italy, if, as in other cases, Gregory did
not have great influence in Gaul, he was at least remembered by
the monks of Canterbury, and later of Northumbria, as their
special Bishop and fellow-monk. As early as c. 605, Mellitus,
then Bishop of London returned to Rome to confer with Pope
Boniface about the English Church, bringing back letters from
the Bishop of Rome and the monastic canons of a Roman synod.[3]
One of the marks of the submission of the English Church at
Whitby was the alteration of the tonsure to conform with the
practice of the Church of the Apostle to the English.[4] A later
Pope, sending Theodore as Archbishop, sent with him an abbot.[5]
English houses looked to Rome for guidance, as a source of
relics and books, as a model of polity.[6] Hardly a year passed
that some English monk or bishop did not travel to Rome to seek

3. Bede, H. E. II. 4. The reference is to Boniface IV,
Gregory's third successor. Note, however, that Gregory's immedi-
ate successor, Sabinian, had evidently reacted against the former
Pope's monastic favoritism, returning several churches to the
control of the secular clergy. (L. Bréhier & R. Aigrain, Grégoire
le Grand, les États Barbares, et la Conquête Arabe /1938/, 392).

4. Bede, H. E. III. 26; Eddius Stephanus, Life of Bishop
Wilfrid, X (D. Whitelock, ed., English Historical Documents:
c. 500-1042 /1955/ 692f).

5. Bede, H. E. IV. 1.

6. That the Regula Benedicti existed in England at an early
date is shown by the existence of a ms. (Oxoniensis) dating from
c. 700. The ms. seems to be the prototype of the pre-Carolingian
family of mss. See McCann, The Rule of Saint Benedict, xv.

guidance or knowledge.[7] Crossing Gaul, _en route_ to and from
Rome these monks sought to share with the Franks and the heathen
the blessings sent them by Gregory the Great and his monks.

The question of influences is a difficult one. Italy and
Rome to which the English--as later the Carolingians--had con-
stant recourse were the source of many modifications of the
Rule in these two centuries. The English kept in touch with
the mother See and her practices; they had a zeal for study and
for liturgics that reflects the non-Benedictine customs of some
Roman houses. Contact with the Celts and Franks certainly
effected certain modifications in their practice. But it was
the spirit of Gregory that effected the spread to England and
thence throughout Europe of a local, moderate, Italian monastic
Rule.

The great appeal of Bede to Egbert of York for reform of
the Church reflects the tenacity of Gregorianism in England.
Bede appeals to the Archbishop's sense of duty, invoking the
image of the coming Judge who demands that the pastor be found
faultless.[8] Gregory's _Regula Pastoralis_ and his Homilies are
held up with the Scriptures as the proper guide of the _rector_.[9]

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7. D. Knowles, _The Monastic Order_, 21f; Bede, _H.E._ and
Historia Abbatum, passim.; see also the various lives of early
bishops and abbots.

8. Bede, _Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum_, 82 (C. Plummer,
ed., _Baedae Opera Historica_ I, 405ff).

9. _Ibid._, 83.

The proposals for monastic reform in this letter are either distinctly Gregorian or natural extensions of Gregory's principles: more dioceses should be established in Northumbria and should have as their centers adequately endowed existing monasteries;[1] monasteries established to avoid taxes should be suppressed or reformed, and monks who take vows to avoid military duties disciplined;[2] the bishops, who zealously guard the monasteries against the power of the crown, must be as zealous in their visitations and in their oversight of monastic morality.[3] It is also indicative of the attachment of Anglo-Saxon monasticism to Gregory's Rome that Abbot Forthred, evidently injured by a confiscation of his house by the king and archbishop in line with Bede's recommendations, went to Rome for help, bringing back an order of restitution from Pope Paul I.[4]

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1. _Ibid._, §§ 9f. This is, of course, in some respects similar to Celtic practice, but it can be justified as Roman from what we know of Augustine's rule in Kent.

2. _Ibid._, 11-13.

3. _Ibid._, 14. The sanction for this activity is peculiarly Gregorian in tone; "Precor sollicite praecaveas, ne, cum idem princeps apostolorum ceterique fidelium gregum duces in die iudicii maximum suae pastoralis curae fructum Christo obtulerint, tuarum aliqua pars ovium inter hedos ad sinsitram Iudicis secerni, atque in aeternum cum maledictione mereatur ire supplicium; quin potius ipse tunc eorum numero merearis ascribi, de quibus ait Ysaias; 'Minimus erit inter mille, et parvulus inter gentem fortissimam.'"

4. The letter is quoted in Whitelock, ed., _English Historical Documents_: _c_. 500-1042, 764f.

Before the decline of English monasticism, which was hastened
by the disastrous Scandanavian invasions, Bede's contemporaries
the great missionaries had spread their monasticism in Germany,
the Low Countries and Gaul. Charles the Great made the Roman
Regula the standard for his realm; Louis the Pious with Benedict
of Aniane brought about monastic uniformity.[5] The monasticism
which, thanks to Gregory, became one of the significant factors
in the transmission of culture and the formation of the new
order was characterized by its liturgical piety, its intellectual
activities, and its sense of the mission of the Church.

It is ironic that this should be so, for Gregory's use of
monks for the English mission was an emergency measure allowed,
as Gregory himself had undertaken the diplomatic mission to
Constantinople and the Roman episcopate, only because someone
had to act. There being no-one else, the monks had to cast off
their sought-after serenity and venture out to convert the
secular. When Gregorian monasticism overran the Frankish houses
under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries and the
reforms of Louis the Pious, it took with it this same basic
inconsistency. It was a monasticism which preserved culture
and spread the Gospel, serving King and Pope. Benedict of
Aniane might attempt to give it again the tranquillity desired
for it by Gregory; he might even try to restore some of the

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5. Knowles, The Monastic Order, 23-30; É. Amann, L'Époque
Carolingienne (1937), 255-266; Butler, Benedictine Monachism,
355-357.

pre-Benedictine rigors of Egyptian asceticism. But Western
Monasticism had been too thoroughly imbued by Gregory with the
Latin sense of duty; it desired the quiet of the cloister, but
it was under the Latin compulsion to serve the Church Militant:
". . . ipse nos, qui interius mysteriis deservire credimur,
curfus exterioribus implicamur . . ."[6]

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6. _Epp._ V. 53a. §1.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AND THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

The sending of Augustine and the other monks to England
was not the only missionary endeavor emanating from Rome in the
pontificate of St. Gregory I. It was, however, in form and in
consequence by far the most significant of the Pope's efforts at
evangelization for it transmitted the Latin cultural and the
theological outlook to the middle ages and led to the conversion
of those Germans and Scandanavians who had not settled within
the old Empire and adopted its ways.

The impending Judgment and the obligation of the chief
pastor to make the claims of the Gospel heard in every land were
the sanctions of Gregory's missionary efforts as of everything
else he did. We are covered, said the Pope, commenting on Job 36:
29-30, by clouds which bring rain to water the earth: when we
look up, that is, we behold heavenly things by means of the lives
of the Apostles and the Fathers who brought us the water of faith
by their preaching.[1] Even now God spreads the clouds, so that,
although he is everywhere, he is manifested locally by means of
his preachers.[2] The success of human preaching depends upon

1. Moral. in Job. XXVII. 10, 18.

2. "Extendit nubes Dominus, dum ministris suis viam prae-
dicationis aperiens, eos in mundi latitudinem circumquaque
diffundit." Moral. in Job, XXVII. 11, 20.

miracles of grace which illumine the world like lightning,[3] and which calm turbulent seas. The nations are subjected to the rule of God by the preacher's announcement of the judgments of God.[4] Against the storms of the world, God sends out his preachers who bring the peace of God's word to the nations, who announce his judgment, and who preach righteousness and the fear of God.[5]

Pagans living within the Empire were not to be tolerated. They were to be punished or admonished so that they might turn from their old ways.[6] Against the continued paganism of many of the peasants on lay and ecclesiastical estates in Sardinia, Gregory launched a considerable missionary offensive. Cyriacus, an abbot, and Felix, an Italian bishop, were commissioned to spearhead the effort within the metropolitan jurisdiction of Januarius of Cagliari.[7] Gregory wrote the Sardinian landholders that this work

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3. *Moral. in Job.* XXVII. 11. 20.

4. *Moral. in Job.* XXVII. 11.21 - 12.22. The reference in 11.21 to the British may be an allusion to the British Church as the most distant Church, or it may be a redacted reference to the mission to the Anglo-Saxons.

5. "Ecce quondam tumidus, jam substratus sanctorum pedibus servit Oceanus, ejusque barbaros motus, quos terreni principes edomare ferro nequiverant, hos pro divina formidine sacerdotum ora simplicibus verbis ligant; et qui catervas pugnantiam infidelis nequaquam metuerat, jam nunc fidelis humilium linquas timet. Quia enim perceptis coelestibus verbis clarescentibus quoque miraculis, virtus ei divinae cognitionis infunditur, ejusdem divinitatis terrore refrenatur, ut prava agere metuat, ac totis desideriis ad aeternitatis gratiam pervenire concupiscat." *Moral. in Job.* XXVII. 11. 21.

6. *Epp.* III. 59; IV. 26; IX. 204; VIII. 1.

7. *Epp.* IV. 23, 27. Gregory is careful to state that his representatives are only to undertake the work if Januarius himself is unable to do so. Thus the missionaries working with the

had to be undertaken in view of the approaching end of the world:
in this crisis the Church could not stand by idly while some men
worshipped stones, for by so doing churchmen jeopardized their
own salvation.[8] Aided by civil authorities, the Church was to
bring the pagans to Christ. Even Constantinople was called upon
to discipline the governor of the island who tolerated pagan cults
for a bribe.[9]

In its form the Sardinian mission was indicative of general
Western missionary tactics as they were to evolve in the next
centuries.[1] Its success[2] was directly related to the missionary's
view of the urgency of his age and to his ability to mobilize the
civil arm. But it was, as also were the missionary efforts with
the Jews and the Lombards[3] a far more parochial kind of mission
than that which was to emerge. It was restricted to the confines
of the nominal Empire, and it was carried on in areas which were

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Archbishop's sanction will acquit the prelate of his evangelical
duty without dissipating his episcopal authority.

8. "Et tamen vos veri Dei cultores a commissis vobis lapides
adorari conspicitis et tacetis? Quid quaeso in tremendo iudicio
dicturi estis, quando hostes Dei et sub potestate vestra suscepis-
tis, et tamen eos Deo subdere atque ad eum revocare contemnitis?"
Epp. IV. 23. See also IV. 25, 27.

9. Epp. V. 38.

1. See R. E. Sullivan, "Early Medieval Missionary Activity:
A Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Methods," Church
History. XXIII, 17-35.

2. Epp. XI. 12.

3. F. H. Dudden, Gregory the Great (1905), II, 151-158.

predominately or, at least officially, Christian.

The idea of the English mission was, then, revolutionary in that it went beyond contemporary Christian society and met pagans in a pagan milieu. What, we must therefore ask, was Gregory's purpose in undertaking the mission to the English? We have noted that it is difficult in the writings of Gregory to find any motivation but the pastoral-eschatological for most of his work. So, in his dealings with other churches and the civil powers, and in his monastic work, there appears to have been no political or personal sanction. And yet, while evangelical zeal seems to have been the only reason for launching the mission of the Anglo-Saxons,[4] it is more difficult, because of the results of the effort, to disabuse ourselves of the idea that Gregory seized this opportunity to plant an ideal Church intensely loyal to Rome.

Indeed, the only letter in which it can be said that Gregory fully outlined the purpose of his English mission[5] indicates strongly that the Pope intended that the work of Augustine of Canterbury should result in something more than a stopgap against imminent doom. The Roman bishop may have been acquitting himself of his evangelical duty, but he seems to have envisioned more than a temporary result.

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4. _Epp._ VI. 10.

5. _Epp._ XI. 37; The same letter appears in _H.E._ I. 32.

Gregory opened his letter to the newly baptized Aethelbert of Kent with an exhortation on kingship reminiscent of those to the Frankish monarchs. Yet it is a significantly different address for it deals with the situation of a recently converted prince whose people are still largely pagan. God made Aethelbert king of the Angli so that, by this good man, the benefits of Christianity might be conferred upon his people. The facts of his kingship and conversion are facts of the divine dispensation.[6] Being thus endowed with grace, the king must with haste extend the faith and put down paganism. Gregory assumed, as had all Christians since the adoption of the faith by the Empire, that it was the duty of the Christian ruler to convert all his subjects, even--if necessary--by force.[7] The reign of Aethelbert was comparable in Gregory's eyes to that of Constantine whose work in the conversion of the Church redounded to his Imperial glory. Aethelbert's work, if it was done diligently, would both give him greater fame than his predecessors and secure his own salvation.[8]

6. "Propter hoc omnipotens Deus bonos quosque ad populorum regimina perducit ut per eos omnibus, quibus praelati fuerint, dona suae pietatis impendat. Quod in Anglorum gentem factum cognovimus, cui vestra gloria idcirco est praeposita, ut per bona quae vobis concessa sunt etiam subiectae vobis genti superna beneficia praestarentur." Epp. XI. 37.

7. "Et ideo, gloriose fili, eam quam accepisti divinitus gratiam sollicita mente custodi . . . Ipse enim vestrae quoque gloriae nomen etiam posteris gloriosius reddit, cuius vos honorem quaeritis et servatis in gentibus." Epp. XI. 37.

8. "Unde factum est, ut antiquorum principum nomen suis vir ille laudibus vinceret et tanto in opinione praecessores suos, quanto et in bono opere superaret. Et nunc itaque vestra gloria congitionem unius Dei patris et filii et spiritus sancti regibus

The king owed his position to divine dispensation, and must use his power to further God's plan. By so doing he could increase his own merit--thus assuring his salvation--and give God glory for the grace he had received.

Gregory also spelled out his view of the relation of this king to his bishop. The primary aspect of this relationship, in view of Aethelbert's recent conversion and in line with Gregory's understanding of the episcopal office, is didactic. Augustine the bishop is "in monasterii regula edoctus, sacrae scripturae scientia repletus, bonis auctore Deo operibus praeditus."[9] These three attributes indicate the role assigned by Gregory to Augustine: he is to establish monastic houses, to teach from holy Scripture, and to abound in good works to the glory of God. Aethelbert is to listen to the bishop's teaching in these areas and to follow his admonitions, for the bishop confronts the king with the will of God. If the king does not do God's will as it is communicated to him by the bishop, the bishop's prayers for the king will not be heard, for God does not hear petitions for those who do not heed godly admonitions. Bishop and king must

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ac populis sibimet subiectis festinet infundere, ut et antiquos gentis suae reges laudibus ac meritis transeat et, quanto in subiectis suis etiam aliena peccata deterserit, tanto etiam de peccatis propriis ante omnipotentis Dei terribile examen sacurior fiat." Epp. XI. 37. In Epp. XI. 35 to Aethelbert's queen, Bertha, the Pope again makes reference to the Constantinian-English parallel: God worked through Helena's influence on her son as he works through your influence on your husband. Bertha was the daughter of a Merovingian king.

9. Epp. XI. 37.

be bound together in works and in faith so that, partaking of
God's benefits in the earthly kingdom, they may ultimately par-
take of the benefits of God's Kingdom.[1]

Thus far, there is nothing in the letter to induce us to
depart from the usually valid conclusion that Gregory had no
extraordinary sanction for his mission to the English. He wrote
to a newly converted ruler and his letter was adjusted to the
needs of such an individual, but he taught essentially the same
concepts as he taught other rulers concerning their duty as
individuals favored by God to respond with a life of faith and
works dedicated to the achievement of God's will in history.
The glory of such a ruler is that of Constantine; he subjects
the temporal order to the will of the divine thereby winning
divine favor for himself.

It is in the curious paragraph of this same letter on
eschatology that we find a new--or at least a variant--element
in the Gregorian theme. Gregory, quite explicitly--and fully
aware of what he was doing--moderated his insistence on the
immanence of the cataclysmic end of history:

> Praeterea scire vestram gloriam volumus, quia,
> sicut in scriptura sacra ex verbis Domini omnipotentis
> agnoscimus, praesentis mundi iam terminus iuxta est et
> sanctorum regnum venturum est, quod nullo umquam
> poterit fine terminari. Adpropinquante autem eodem
> mundi termino multa imminent quae antea non fuerunt,

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1. "Tota igitur mente cum eo vos in fervore fidei stringite
atque adnisum illius virtute quam vobis divinitas tribuit adiu-
vate, ut regni sui vos ipse faciat esse participes, cuius vos
fidem in regno vestro recipi et facitis custodire." Epp. XI.
37.

> videlicit inmutationes aeris terroresque de caelo et
> contra ordinationem temporum tempestates, bella, fames,
> pestilentiae, terrae motus per loca. *Quae tamen non
> omnia nostris diebus ventura sunt, sed post nostros
> dies omnia subaequentur.* Vos itaque si qua ex his
> evenire in terra vestra cogniscitis, nullo modo vestrum
> animum perturbetis quia idcirco haec signa de fine
> saeculi praemittuntur, ut de animabus nostris debeamus
> esse solliciti, de mortis hora suspecti et venturo
> iudici in bonis actibus inveniamur esse praeparati.[2]

You will hear men announcing the imminent end, but it will not

come in our time; the signs of the end we see are warnings of a

more distant Judgment sent to remind us of that dreadful day.

But the preaching of Gregory himself in Rome had been quite

explicitly to the effect that the day was fast approaching and

that the signs were signs of the imminence of Judgment.[3] Now

it is true that Gregory was not so apocalyptic as to predict the

hour of Judgment and that he may here only have been warning the

naive barbarian king against literalism. But, in view of his

teaching elsewhere, it seems difficult to escape the conclusion

that this mitigation of the eschatological theme was based on

the contrast of the situations of Italy and of the isolated Eng-

lish kingdom. Italy was inextricably embroiled in the violent

socio-political upheaval which was shaking the whole Mediterranean

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2. *Epp.* XI. 37. (italics mine.)

3. *Hom. in Evang.* I. 1; *Hom. in Ezech.* II. VI. 22. Examina-
tion of *Epp.* XI. *passim.* should show that Gregory's eschatology,
although not so urgent as in the most critical year of his pon-
tificate, 595, was still in 601 a vivid and integral part of his
faith. XI. 28, for instance, is the important letter to Jerusalem
which defines the Church as the Ark of salvation in the turbulent
world.

basin; but England--remote, long since abandoned to the invaders
by the Empire, retaining only a few archaeological remnants of
its days as a Roman colony--was largely unaffected by the woes
of the Continent. One might almost say that, in Gregory's
thought, as elsewhere in the Latin theologians, the impending
cataclysm was intended to meet a specific human crisis: the
entrance of the barbarians into the Imperial domain for Salvian
and Orosius, the collapse of the Imperial remnant for Gregory.
Judgment tended more to be retributive than to represent the
culmination of the divine purpose for history. Gregory seemed
to feel that an ideal church could be planted in Kent, and that
it could mature under the tutelage of its monastic bishop and
under the protection of its newly converted king. It would be
immune from the crisis which made religious purity impossible
elsewhere in Europe. The signs it perceived of the approaching
Judgment would be occasional warnings; they would not be the
same kinds of signs as those which were shaking other nations
to their very foundations.

Gregory concluded the letter to Aethelbert by saying that
he addressed the king so that, in consequence of the spread of
the faith in the kingdom, papal precepts might be disseminated
in the new Church. He looks forward, he says, to the day when
the conversion of England will be perfected.[4]

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4. "Haec nunc, gloriosi fili, paucis locutus sum, ut, cum
christiana fides in regno vestro excreverit, nostra quoque apud
vos locutio latior excrescat et tanto plus loqui libeat, quanto
se in mente nostra gaudia de gentis vestrae perfecta conversione
multiplicant." Epp. XI. 37.

We can conclude, then, without attributing to Gregory a trans-
cendant historical insight which enabled him to foresee the events
of the next two centuries, that he regarded the situation of
England as essentially different from that of the rest of Europe
and that he thought this condition propitious for the nurture of
an ideal church. He sought to recover for Christ a province
lost to the Emperor by planting a Church which had Gregory's own
understanding of the nature of the bishop-king relationship and
which, he felt, was removed from the turbulent arena of the
Mediterranean crisis.

It is a mark of the complete Imperial abandonment of Britain
that we know so little of the condition of the country after the
Germanic invasion. The British Church, whatever its connection
with the Imperial and with the later Saxon, retreated and did
not attempt to evangelize the newly-settled tribes.[5] The break
was so definite that, in the period before Augustine's arrival
in Kent, almost no political, cultural, institutional or agri-
cultural remnants of the Imperial occupation were adopted by the

5. Hence the invective of Gildas, De Excidio et Conquestu
Brittaniae, on which Bede relies for most of his information in
H.E. I. 1-22. ("quia inter alia inenarrabilem scelerum facta,
quae historicus eorum Gildas flebili sermone describit, et hoc
addebant, ut numquam genti Saxonum siue Anglorum, secum Brit-
taniam incolenti, uerbum fidei praedicando committerent." H.E.
I. 22). See D. Whitelock, The Beginnings of English Society
(1956), Chap. 1; F. M. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 2d Edn.
(1955), Chap. 1, and pp. 96-103; P. H. Blair, An Introduction
to Anglo-Saxon England (1956), 1-27.

Germans.[6] It is not surprising, then, that historians since Gregory's first biographer have attempted to find a source for the Pope's information about and interest in the English.[7] Whether his information was literary, derived from a wandering Angle or Briton, or came from the Frankish provinces[8] will never be known. We can, however, deduce something of the circumstances from the correspondence.

Gregory first expressed his concern for the English in a letter of September, 595, to Candidus, his emissary in Gaul. Since the income of the Gallican Patrimony could not be sent to Italy, it was to be used for the purchase of some young English slaves who were to be trained in the monasteries and returned to their homeland with a priest to convert that heathen country.[9] For some reason Gregory did not wait until this instruction could be carried out, for later in the same year he dispatched Augustine and his company by way of Gaul to the English nation.

6. R. Lennard, "From Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England," in Wirtschaft und Kultur (Dopsch Festschrift, 1938), 69. N. K. Chadwick, in her Introduction to Studies in the Early British Church (1958), pp. 11f, discusses the continuity and self-consciousness of the British Church, but fails to produce evidence of any creative relationship with the Saxons.

7. The story of the slave boys first occurs in the Whitby Life of Gregory, ix (Gasquet's ed, 1904). It has been suggested with good reason (L. Bréhier & R. Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand (1938), 280, n. 4.) that the story is etiological and depends upon Epp. VI. 10.

8. Bertha, Queen of Kent, was a Frank and had a bishop at Canterbury as her chaplain, but neither had attempted to convert the Kentish nation. See H.E. I. 25; Greg. Tours, Hist. Franc. IV. 26; IX. 26.

9. Epp. VI. 10.

The fact that the expedition was so hastily sent off with little preparation and less knowledge of the conditions to be met suggests that Gregory had been induced by some urgent petitioner to seek the salvation of the Angli.

The petitioners can hardly have been Frankish, for Gregory had to write special letters to Merovingian Gaul to introduce the monks, and these indicate that the Merovingian kings and bishops had no prior acquaintance with the evangelical scheme. After receiving a petition from the monks that they be allowed to return to Gaul, Gregory made Augustine the abbot of the group and armed him with letters of introduction to the kings and bishops of the Franks, requesting safe conduct and succor for the mission.[1] The English, he tells the Merovingian addressees, desire conversion; it will be to the benefit of all to assist God in his evident purpose for these heathen people.[2]

Although Augustine doubtless had verbal instructions of more substance than the letters indicate, the missions seems to have been impulsively dispatched. They were simply to convert the heathen, an act which was required by the eschatological imperative.

There is little primary information concerning the progress of the mission. Bede[3] says that Augustine was received cordially

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1. Epp. VI. 49-54, 56.

2. Epp. VI. 49, 57.

3. H.E. I. 25ff.

by Aethelbert in 597. The missionaries established themselves
at Kent where they lived at the old Roman church of St. Martin
leading a primitive monastic life,[4] Between 597 and 601, Augustine, having been consecrated bishop, evidently baptized a number of Englishmen.[5] Gregory heard, probably from Laurentius and
Peter who returned to Rome,[6] that the mission received cordial
hospitality and some assistance--perhaps clergy to act as interpreters--on their journey through Gaul.[7] But there is no record
of correspondence between Gregory and Augustine between 597 and
601.

In the latter year, Gregory dispatched a second mission
with an interesting series of letters to assist Augustine at
Canterbury. The missionaries, whose number, according to Bede,
included Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus and Rufinianus,[8] were commended to the Frankish rulers and bishops as had been their

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4. H.E. I. 26 (". . . coeperunt apostolicam primitiuae
ecclasiae uitam imitare. . ."). This may reflect Epp. XI. 56a
(H.E. I. 27 was evidently inserted by Bede when he received
that letter after the History was nearly finished), or may indicate that the tradition does not associate Benedictinism with
early Kentish monasticism.

5. Gregory, in Epp. VIII. 29, says that he was "Germaniarum
episcopis episcopus factus" and that on Christmas, 597, he had
baptized 10,000. Bede mentions no numbers, but states, in H.E.
I. 27, that he was consecrated by Virgilius of Arles /he mistakenly says Aetherius/.

6. H.E. I. 27.

7. Epp. VIII. 4; IX. 47, 48, 50, 51.

8. H.E. I. 29.

predecessors.[9] They brought with them the archiepiscopal pallium
for the Bishop of the Angli[1] and books, relics and vestments for
the Church.[2]

The letters indicate that Gregory had been informed of the
political and ecclesiastical situation in England, and was pre-
pared to deal with the situation and with the individuals in it
in at least a superficial manner. Thus the letter to Queen
Bertha shows Gregory's awareness that she is a Christian and a
Frank. It plays on whatever sentimental attachment she may have
to the Empire by comparing her with Helena and by asserting that
she is known even by the Emperor in Constantinople. The queen
is exhorted to work with the mission to the achievement of its
goal.[3]

Augustine received two epistles. The first was an exhorta-
tion to humility. Gregory gives thanks to God for the great
success of Augustine's work, but he is solicitous lest he become

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9. _Epp_. XI. 34, 38, 40-42, 47, 48, 50, 51. Note that
Gregory was not afraid, while commending his missionaries, to
take their hosts to tasks for abuses tolerated in their nations
and churches.

1. _Epp_. XI. 39.

2. "... et per eos generaliter uniuersa, quae ad cultum
erant at ministerium ecclesiae necessaria, uasa uidelicet sacra,
et uestemente alterium, ornamenta quoque ecclesiarum, et sacedo-
talia uel clericilia indumenta, sanctorum etiam apostolorum ac
martyrum reliquias, nec non et codices plurimos." _H.E_. I. 29.
It would seem, thus, that at least the nucleus of the Canterbury
library was Roman.

3. _Epp_. XI. 29.

vain. He urges the monk-bishop diligently to examine his conscience. He is to remember that God did mighty things by the agency of Moses, but Moses nonetheless was a sinner and was judged harshly for his sins.[4] The bishop must ever be humble, not glorifying himself for the miracles God sees fit to do through him; yet he must as the same time have confidence and certain hope in the salvation of Christ.[5] This letter is personal and was evidently written to meet the spiritual condition of the bishop; the second letter, conveying the pallium is more official. Although it contains the usual condition that the vestment be worn only for the Mass, this epistle departs from the usual sterotype for such notices by dealing with the organization of the English Church. The southern Church is to be centered in London and will have twelve suffragans; a northern metropolitical see is to be established at York with a like number of suffragans. Although Augustine will have jurisdiction of both areas in his lifetime, the metropolitans are to act independently after his death. Gregory thus attempts to accommodate the division of England between the southern confederacy of which Aethelbert is leader

4. "Si igitur, frater carissime, et illum agnoscimus post signa pro culpa mortuum, quem omnipotenti Deo novimus praecipue electum, quanto nos debemus metu contremescere, qui necdum adhuc novimus, si electi sumus?" Epp. XI. 36.

5. "Nam peccator ego spem certissimam teneo, quia per omnipotentis creatoris ac redemptoris nostri Dei domini Iesu Christi gratiam iam tua peccata dimissa sunt et idcirco electus es, ut per te dimittantur aliena." Epp. XI. 36.

and the independent Northumbrian monarchy.[6] The two archbishops are, unrealistically, given authority over the remnants of the British Church.[7]

Another letter in this group[8] is addressed to Virigilius, the bishop of Arles. He is bidden to support his brother in England and to receive him cordially whenever the occasion arises. If Augustine should suggest reforms to Virigilius, the latter should listen, and should join him in an investigation.[9]

The final letter of Gregory to the English Church is a note to Mellitus, bearer of the group of documents dated 601, which was sent to reach him en route in Gaul. Gregory had concluded that, rather than destroying English pagan temples, Augustine

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6. Stenton, _Anglo-Saxon England_, 108.

7. _Epp._ XI. 39.

8. _Epp._ XI. 37, to Aethelbert, has been discussed above. XI. 56a, although it has striking Gregorian characteristics, is in an unique form and contains material more consonant with the hand of a later canonist. It is, therefore, better to treat this as a document of the Gregorian tradition and not as a truly Gregorian letter. In recent debate on the authenticity of this letter, S. Brechter (reported by both the following articles) denied the authenticity of the ep.; M. Deansley & P. Grosjean ("The Canterbury Edition of the Answers of Pope Gregory I to Augustine," _Journal of Ecclesiastical History_. I. 1-49) have held that it is a mosaic of Gregorian writing and Canterbury tradition assembled by Abp. Nothelm for Bede's _Historia_; and P. Meyvaert ("Les _Responsiones_ de S. Grégoire le Grand à S. Augustin de Cantorbéry," _Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique_. LIV. 879-894) tends to argue for authenticity when pointing to errors in the article by Deansley & Grosjean, but concludes, "ce probleme demeure encore ouverte."

9. _Epp._ XI. 45. This is, of course, reminiscent of _Responsione_ 9, _Epp._ XI. 56a. The latter is probably derived from tradition and from the letter to Virigilius.

should be instructed to tear down the idols, install altars with relics and consecrate the edifices as Churches. There is an interesting and detailed instruction on missionary tactics. The Angles are to be led to full Christian life by steps and not by leaps. They may worship the true God in familiar places; they may adapt pagan festivals to Christian use; they may butcher animals to be eaten to God's glory in imitation of post-Egyptian Israelite worship.[1]

Although Gregory lived several years longer there is no record in the Corpus or in Bede's work of further communication between Canterbury and Rome. Before tracing the subsequent history of the English Church, therefore, it might be well to enumerate the specific endowments of Gregory to this mission so that they can be clearly in mind as we consider the tenacity of his work in the next two centuries. The mission sent out by Gregory was singularly free: it was sent to people of unknown culture and customs with little or no prior consideration of its tactics and few specific instructions. It amounted, indeed, to sending a bishop with a familia outside the structure of the Catholic

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1. "Nam duris mentibus simul omnia abscidere impossibile esse non dubium est, quia is qui summum locum ascendere nititur gradibus vel passibus, non autem saltibus elevatur. Sic Israhelitico populo in Aegypto Dominus se quidem innotuit, sed tamen eis sacrificiorum usus, quae diabolo solebat exhibere in cultu proprio reservavit, ut eis in suo sacrificio animalia immolare praeciperet, quatenus cor mutantes aliud retinerent, ut, etsi ipsa essent animalia quae offerre consueverant, vero tamen Deo haec et non idolis immolantes, iam sacrificia ipsa non essent. Haec igitur dilectionem tuam praedicto fratri necesse est dicere, ut ipse in praesenti illic positus perpendat, qualiter omnia debeat dispensare." Epp. XI. 56.

Church to create a local church which should ultimately become a part of the whole. Gregory took care to flatter the independence of the heathen king--although he enhanced the flattery by reminding the king of a parallel situation in Roman history--and to urge the prince to regard himself as singular protector of the Church, working with the bishop to build the Christian commonwealth. The encouragement of cooperation between the crown and the episcopate, with the instructions for metropolitical division of the realm and for suffragan dioceses, fostered the idea that the Church was to have strong centralised organization and structure. Gregory made Augustine chief bishop of England with the obligation of bringing all other Churches in the area under the control of Canterbury. He painted for Canterbury a picture of the ideal bishop, personally humble and yet confident of his role in the divine dispensation. He allowed the missionaries to make certain compromises with pagan custom which would make the tremendous adjustment to a new religion much easier, but at the same time, by his donation of Roman ecclesiastical artifacts and of the nucleus of a library, he made the fruits of Latin Christian culture available to Saxon Christians.

In two particulars Gregory departed from his usual methods. His letters to the new Church are singular for their moderated eschatology. It is indicative of the nature of Latin, as of Gregorian, eschatology that it comes to the foreground in moments of crisis, and that in calmer situations the emphasis is shifted

to personal responsibility in the face of the Judge. England was removed from the Mediterranean crisis--it was no longer part of the dissolving *Imperium*; therefore the emphasis on crisis and immanent Judgment was not necessary. Finally, Gregory did not find it necessary to define the role of the Papacy and to insist upon its prerogatives. This does not mean that he considered the English to be without his sphere of influence; it indicates, rather, that he considered the affection of these people for the Papacy secure in their recognition that Rome was the giver of Christianity and the sustainer of the English Church. Such were the endowments of the Bishop of Rome to the Church of England, endowments which were considered the basic framework for the establishment of an ideal--through real and working--Church in a pagan land.

Augustine's work in the years after Gregory's death was a work of consolidation and not one of advancement. Relying imperiously and unrealistically on the Pope's grant of authority over the British bishops, he was unable to convert them from their insularity.[2] With the assistance of Aethelbert, however, he was able to consecrate Mellitus as Bishop of London and Justus as Bishop of Rochester. Before his death, he consecrated Laurentius as his successor in Canterbury.[3] It is easy to underestimate the

2. H.E. II. 2.

3. H.E. II. 3-4.

work of the first Archbishop of Canterbury. While it is true that he was overly cautious and did not understand the culture of the British or of the Anglo-Saxons, it is more important that he left a fairly well organized see in one kingdom with a monastic school to train successors, and that he founded the tradition of a centralized and organized Church.[4]

Had Augustine not accomplished at least this, it is doubtful that his Church would have survived the next few years. The Kentish royal house had not been thoroughly Christianized, and neighboring kings were even less affected by the new religion. Thus the reign of Laurentius saw a pagan reaction during which Mellitus and Justus were both deprived of their sees. Although Justus was able to return to Rochester, some time elapsed before London again received a bishop. Under Mellitus (c. 619-624), under Justus, who was translated from Rochester, (d. 626), and under his successor Honorius (d. 652), the continued Christian profession of the kings of Kent was became an assured fact. The kings Eadbald and Eorcenbehrt seem to have assumed the initiative in establishing the Church among their subjects. At the death of Honorius, although the see remained vacant for some time, a Saxon, Deusdedit, was elected sixth bishop.[5] The memory of Gregory's

4. Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 110. That he was remembered for precisely these contributions is indicated by Bede, H.E. I. 33; II. 3.

5. H.E. II. 4-8, 18, 20; III. 8, 14, 20; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 111-113.

view of Christian kingship was kept alive, though to the derogation of Episcopal authority. The Kentish Church, losing its expansive energy, became a settled institution, but it kept contact with the Roman Church[6] and maintained at least a halting loyalty to the tradition of Gregory and Augustine.

During this period, it was at the initiative of the royal house in Kent that the first Northumbrian mission was undertaken by Paulinus. Like Bertha's chaplain, Paulinus was consecrated in 625, and sent to the north as chaplain to the Christian Queen of a pagan ruler; being one of Gregory's monk-missionaries, however, he undertook to convert the people to whom he went. Letters from Rome reinforced Paulinus in this effort, which resulted in the conversion of Edwin, the king. The event seems to have captured the imagination of the Northumbrian people, for details of the event including even a physical description of Paulinus were transmitted orally to Bede and the Whitby biographer of Gregory.[7] Paulinus' energy was not confined to Northumbria, however; he also worked in Lindsey which was under Edwin's control. But when the Mercians overran the country in 632, the conversion of the northern English proved to have been superficial. Paulinus was forced to escape to Kent, where he revived the vacant see of

6. H.E. II. 4, 8, 18.

7. H. E. II. 9-14; F. A. Gasquet, ed. A Life of St. Gregory by a Monk of Whitby (1904), XV-XVII; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon, 113-114.

Rochester.[8]

Except for the semi-Gallican Church in East Anglia,[9] then, the Churches in Kent were all that remained of the mission of Gregory when about 635, a new movement began in the English Church. The Kentish Church had grown provincial and was under the shadow of the crown; but it was increasing in stability, and it had maintained its ties with Rome, built its monastic school, and fostered a tradition with fond memories of Gregory and Augustine. The first phase of the history of the English Church ended with the death of the last of the Gregorian missionaries. The future held no great promise for the Church of Kent, but the past with its Gregorian-Augustinian tradition offered at least safety for the present.

The introduction of Celtic Christianity in Northumbria opened a second and distinct chapter in the evangelization of England--a chapter which was marked by a struggle between the Celts and the Roman party. Although the origins of Celtic and British Christianity are obscure, it is likely that both derived from the Gallican Church of the occupation period, and that, after the withdrawal of Imperial forces and the English invasions, these churches remained in isolation and retained certain customs which had been

8. H.E. II. 16, 20; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 115-116. The importance of the survival of James the Deacon in York seems to have been overemphasized by Bede; the thread of Roman continuity in Northumbria was very slender.

9. H.E. II. 15; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 116-117.

abandoned elsewhere in the West. In the latter half of the
sixth century, the Irish Celts began an expansive movement--or,
more accurately, embarked on a series of peregrinations--which
took Columbanus to the continent where he was active in monastic
affairs and Columba to Iona whence the Picts in Scotland were
converted.[1]

The Celts, like the Britons, did not attempt the conversion
of England, however, until they had been asked to do so. During
the reign of Edwin, the Bernician royal house was in exile in
Scotland where Oswald was converted by the Celts of Iona. The
death of Edwin at Hatfield had been the result of a reactionary
alliance of British and heathen leaders who mistrusted his efforts
to expand his authority politically and religiously, and who
hated above all his alliance with Kent which was symbolized by
his marriage and adoption of Kentish Christianity. When Oswald,
who had been converted by the Celts during his exile, came to
power in Northumbria, he asked for a bishop from Iona and was
sent Aidan who established himself at Lindisfarne and undertook
to complete in Celtic form the conversion begun by Paulinus.
This indigenous Christianity was acceptable where the Roman was
not. It was not until the power of the pagans had been greatly
diminished that Oswald's successor, Oswiu, could renew the
alliance with Kent and attempt the reconciliation of the Celtic

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1. See J. A. Duke, The Columban Church (1932), 1-81.

and Roman religious parties.[2]

Under Oswald and Oswiu, then, Aidan, Finan, and such notable suffragans as Cedd were able to disseminate the new religion throughout most of England.[3] With the conversion of the Mercians,[4] a general Christian settlement in the North was completed. When the heathen and British threat was no longer a reality, the Roman party could emerge again and take up the work begun by Edwin and Paulinus.

The party had not been inactive in the thirty-year interim: Scots, such as Ronan, who had been abroad, had agitated for an alteration of the Celtic Easter reckoning; James the Deacon had remained in York since the departure of Paulinus and had not capitulated to the Celts; Oswiu was married to a Kentish princess who kept the Latin Easter;[5] more important, there seems to have been a second generation of younger clergy who were passionately in favor of following Roman custom. Wilfrid, the most important

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2. H.E. II. 19; III. 6; III. 9-13, etc. /The hagiographic material about Oswald probably derives from a tradition that he was a martyr for this cause./ See also Blair, Introduction to Anglo-Saxon, 124-126, 50-51; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 79-83; and Chadwick in The Early British Church, 12-14. This is my own interpretation, but one which seems amply supported by the evidence. Note the interest expressed by the Popes in Celtic conversion at this early period, H.E. II. 19.

3. H.E. III. 19, 21-24.

4. The Mercians were the last dissidents. Responsible for the death of Oswald, they were not converted until they had achieved independence of the Northumbrians. H.E. III. 24.

5. H.E. III. 25.

of the latter group, was a protege of Queen Eanfled and had visited Rome with Benedict Biscop. After his return to England, the King of the West Saxons gave him an estate at Ripon where he established a house which followed Roman monastic use.[6]

The time was, thus, propitious for abandonment of the Celtic use. The king assembled a council at Whitby and formally espoused the customs of the Catholic Church. The Whitby debate is interesting. Colman of Lindisfarne, speaking for the Celts, had nothing to offer but the customs of the fathers of his insular Church; he plainly based his appeal on local sentimentality and on suspicion of the cultural and political motivations of the foreign party. Wilfrid's appeal was just as plainly based upon the advantages of Roman culture and of the maintenance of continental connections.[7] Thus Oswiu's decision in favor of the Roman party was not a liturgical judgment but a decision to involve his kingdom in the past and the future of Western Europe.

The second period of English Church history, then, witnessed a political and cultural reaction to the Gregorian mission. Edwin, taking the initiative, had acted precipitously in espousing Catholic Christianity and was put down. Oswald and Oswiu wisely moved more cautiously to put down the heathern threat by using the Celts to complete the conversion of the North. Finally,

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6. Eddius Stephanus, Life of Bishop Wilfrid (ed. B. Colgrave, 1927), i-ix; H.E. V. 19.

7. H.E. III. 25; Stephanus, Life of Wilfrid, X.

taking advantage of the tenacity and growing prestige of the Roman party, Oswiu was able overtly to espouse the larger cause. The struggle did not end immediately, although the Celts--probably at Oswiu's suggestion--withdrew or conformed.[8] Many of the monasteries seem to have retained their Celtic heritage, although the episcopate was largely given over to the Romanists or to those who conformed.[9]

Our interpretation of the significance of Whitby tends to be confirmed by the event which inaugurated the period of consolidation and organization: the kings of Northumbria and Kent, upon the death of Archbishop Deusdedit conferred together on the state of the English Church and jointly nominated one Wighard whom they sent to Rome to be consecrated by the successor Peter.[1] The fact that, when Wighard died before his consecration, no Roman could be found to replace him is indicative of the state of the Roman Church in 667; but the choice of Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek monk, prove entirely felicitous. Theodore, thoroughly indoctrinated in Roman ways arrived with Hardian, a monk from Africa, and Wilfrid's friend, Benedict Biscop, in 669. He under-

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8. H.E. III. 26.

9. H.E. III. 26-28; Duke, The Columban Church, 101-106. The tension between Celt and Roman is apparent in the comparison of Caedda and Wilfrid, H.E. III. 28.

1. H.E. III. 29. It is significant that the letter from the Pope announcing the death of Wighard is addressed to Oswiu alone; the zealous Northumbrian had evidently taken the initiative in this nomination.

took immediately to reorganize the English Church.[2]

After acquainting himself with the situation of the Church
by means of a thorough visitation, Theodore called the first
English ecclesiastical council at Hartford in 672.   The canons
of the council show the clearly Romano-Gregorian reform platform
which the new archbishop intended to put to work in England.
The very fact that the crown did not call the council, shows
Theodore's clear intention to restore control of the Church to
the episcopate.   While the canons--especially the first, which
is concerned with Easter--were designed to combat lingering
Celticisms, they were, as clearly, thoroughly Gregorian.   Bishops
were to restrict themselves to their proper sees and not to
intrude upon the jurisdiction of their brothers; the episcopate
was not to interfere with the monasteries; monastic stability
was enjoined; the clergy were to remain in their dioceses except
as the bishop allowed them to travel; clergy were to accept what-
ever hospitality was offered them and were not to exercise the
priestly role while visiting without the permission of the local
bishop; annual episcopal synods were to be held and the rank of
bishops at these was to be determined by seniority; the number
of dioceses was to be increased; marriage canons were to be en-
forced.[3]   Most of these injunctions find parallels in the English

2. H.E. IV. 1; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 130-132.

3. H.E. IV. 5.

correspondence of Gregory;[4] whatever items have no such parallel find clear sanction elsewhere in his writing and show at least the fidelity of Theodore to thoroughly a Latin concept of ecclesiastical order.

Other events of the reign of Theodore support the view that his purpose was thoroughly to Latinize the English Church. The Council of Hatfield supported the position taken by Rome at the sixth Ecumenical Council.[5] The division of sees, in accord with Gregory's intention to create two metropolitan jurisdictions, was undertaken, although the work was never to be completed in the form prescribed by the founder.[6] Theodore advised the kings in their disputes.[7] He attempted, with help from visitors and from those who had been to Rome, to Romanize the liturgy.[8] He took a direct interest in the development of the school in Canterbury, and in the establishment of the great Benedictine houses and schools elsewhere. In this work Hadrian and Benedict Biscop, who made six trips to Rome and left large libraries of Roman books at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, were Theodore's great

4. The similarity to Epp. XI. 56a is especially striking; and fortifies our hypothesis that the letter represents a growing body of Gregorian tradition at Canterbury.

5. H.E. IV. 17.

6. H.E. IV. 12.

7. H.E. IV. 21.

8. H.E. IV. 2, 18.

assistants.[9] Theodore is also remembered as a great canonist.[1]

The Celtic party retained some power and was able to impede Theodore's work. Ironically, however, the zeal of Wilfrid for things Roman was probably the chief cause of his difficulties in Northumbria;[2] the machinations of this curious bishop caused Theodore no little difficulty at a time when what he needed most was tolerant and quiet, but determined, devotion to the cause of the Catholic mission. In the person of Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, the Celtic and the Roman met in a man of strong characteristics of Irish saintliness, yet of humble devotion to the Church Catholic.[3] Although the Roman party was clearly in control, the Northumbrian Church venerated the saints of its Celtic heritage at the same time that it worked most zealously to achieve the stability of a Roman church province.[4]

Theodore's episcopate was the decisive age of the English Church. It marked a return to the Gregorian vision and an implementation of that vision in the order of the Church.[5] It prepared the Church for the great age of learning and of missionary out-

9. Bede. Hist. Abbat. 1-13 (C. Plummer, ed., Baedae Opera Historica /1896/, I, 364ff.); H.E. IV. 18.

1. See Blair, Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England, 139f.

2. H.E. IV. 6, 19; V. 19.

3. H.E. IV. 27-32; Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 125ff.

4. See Bede, H.E. III-V, passim.

5. For evaluations of Theodore see Blair, Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England, 135-140; and Stenton, Anglo-Saxon England, 130-141.

reach which would continue to the time of the Danish invasions and which ultimately permitted the revivification of the Frankish church and of the Papacy.

The age of Theodore had nurtured a group of young men, brought up in the school of Canterbury or its daughter schools at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, who delighted in the Latin tradition, who honored St. Gregory as the founder and ideal of the English Church, who worked to maintain and develop the Latin spirit as it had expressed itself in culture, in the monastic movement, and in missionary zeal. We can do no more here than to indicate summarily the indebtedness of these cultural and evangelistic movements to the mission of Gregory.

It is often held that the English missions to the continent were inspired by the Celtic remnant in English Christianity.[6] The important thing about the Anglo-Saxon missionary outreach, however, was that it grew from the cultural crisis of Northumbria in the seventh century and that it was inspired by the desire to share precisely the same ideals as the Gregorian mission had given the English Church. The missionaries were Celts who had been trained by Romanists and who zealously repudiated the Celtic concepts. Wilfrid's brief and incidental mission in Frisia in

6. So S. J. Crawford, Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom (1933), 35ff, declares that the Northumbrian provenance of the missionaries demonstrates that the movement is but a missionary wanderlust of the Celts.

678-679 was probably but part of a journey to Rome.[7] His work, however, greatly influenced his followers who, in following his missionary example, were motivated by his zeal to spread the ancient and superior Latin culture and his desire--derivative of the cultural zeal--to enhance the position of the Papacy. Mission, as defined by these men, was the extension of the Church, Latin and Catholic, at the instigation of its earthly head, the Pope.

Willibrord, the second great missionary, exemplifies this movement. Educated at York from Ripon, he retired to Ireland in 678, the year of Wilfrid's banishment. There he communicated to Egbert the Wilfridian papal-evangelistic zeal, and--when Egbert was unable to go as he planned to Frisia and to Rome--obtained a commission to set out himself for Germany. He first commended himself to Pepin, and then hurried to Rome to receive the Papal commission. He returned later to Rome for archiepiscopal consecration.[8] The Anglo-Saxon missionaries were from Celtic regions, then, but their evangelical zeal derived from their espousal of the new culture and their aim was to spread Latin Christianity as emissaries of the Pope.

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7. Stephenus, Life of Wilfrid, XXV-XXVIII. For the political circumstances of Wilfrid's mission and its influence, see Wilhelm Levison, England and the Continent in the Eighth Century (1946), 49-51.

8. H.E. V. 9-11; Alcuin, Life of Willibrord (in C.H. Talbot, trans., Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany /1954/, 3-22); Crawford, Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom, 39-45; Levison, England and the Continent, 52ff.

R. E. Sullivan in an important article[9] has pointed out the
uniqueness of the Western missionary effort. Whereas in the East
the Church, its way prepared by the state, sent an elaborately
prepared mission to teach the pure and elaborate doctrine of the
Byzantine Church in all its intricate detail, Western missions
were spontaneous, unorganized and independent of the states at
their inception. The prototype of such missions was that sent
to Canterbury. Whatever Celtic elements they assimilated, the
English missions to the continent owed their elan and their form
to the Gregorian mission. They were papal and monastic; they
sought the aid of the princes, but were not political in origin;
they were motivated by the Latin spirit to disseminate the Latin
heritage; they were willing to accommodate the Gospel to the
needs of those to whom they preached. They were bringing the
possibility of that perfection to which their Gospel looked and
not, as the Greeks, setting up earthly shadows of the heavenly
perfection.

The culture of the Northumbrian monasteries of the eighth
century reflects in a comparable way the indebtedness of the
English to the Romans. Here again, although the saintliness and
piety of the Celts doubtless played its part, and though the
libraries had volumes of non-Roman literature, the Anglo-Saxons
were chiefly motivated by their Latinity. The very structure of

9. "Early Medieval Missionary Activity," Church History,
XXIII, 17-35.

Bede's _Ecclesiastical History_--a volume remarkable for the very
fact that it is not simply chronicle--betrays the fact that the
sole desire of the Saxon Church was to continue the heritage of
Rome. Book I of the work tells of the colonization of the island
by Rome and of the apostasy of the Britons after the withdrawal.
When the Britons failed to convert their new masters, Rome again,
in the person of its bishop, came to the rescue of England, to do
the Britons' work for them. One feels at the outset that the
destiny of England is in the retention of Latin culture and that
its history is to be judged by its faithfulness to that destiny.
Book II begins with praise of Gregory and a summary biography--
with bibliography. It is the history of the Augustinian mission
to its disastrous end at the death of Edwin. In the third Book
Bede deals with the cultural and political crisis of Northumbria.
Although he is not so parochial as to ignore the santliness of
the great Celtic saints, the great figures of the Book are clearly
the Roman churchmen and King Oswiu. The climax of the whole his-
tory is Whitby, which makes possible the joint nomination of a
new Archbishop of Canterbury. The fourth Book is the history of
the consolidation of Theodore's authority and of the development
of monasticism. Cuthbert, the Romanized Celt, saintly yet
catholic, is the predominant figure.[1] Finally, Bede deals with
the present: the missions, the monastics and the continuing work

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1. Bede's treatment of both Wilfrid and Cuthbert is inter-
esting. The one, so wrong on many occasions, is not criticized
because his cause was obviously the correct one; the other, so
great a saint that he could not be ignored, needed to have his
Romanisms emphasized.

of the episcopate. The work ends on a note of realized eschatology: the English Church has realized its destiny in the history of the Latin Western world:

> Qua adriente pace ac serenitate temporum, plures in gente Nordanhymbrorum, tam nobiles, quam priuati, se suosque liberos, depositis armis, stabagunt magis, accepta tonsura, monasterialibus adscribere uotis, quam bellicis exercere studiis. Quae res quem sit habitura finem, posterior aetas uidebit.
> Hic est inpraesentiarum uniuersae status Brittaniae, anno aduentus Anglorum in Brittaniam circiter ducentesimo octogesimo quinto, dominicae autem incarnationis anno DCCXXI; in cuius regno perpetuo exsultet terra, et congratulante in fide eius Brittania, laetentur insulae mutlae, et confiteantur memoriae sanctitatis eius.[2]

Finally, of course, the cult of Gregory in Saxon literature testifies to his place in the history of that Church. The first English hagiography[3] is the Whitby life of Saint Gregory. The work is the first source for all subsequent biography of the Pope and it is eloquent in its praise of the 'Apostle to the English.' Like Bede, the early monk of Hild's once-Celtic monastery sees the decisiveness of Gregory's role in the history of England:

> Juxta cuius sententiam quando omnes apostoli suas secum provincias ducentes, Domino in die iudicii ostendent, atque singuli gentium doctores, non ille id est gentem Anglorum eo miratius per se gratia Dei credimus edoctam adducere, quo eam corpore absens sed tantum spiritu presens, apostolica divinitus potestate eius audacter, fortis nimirum viri eius quem Christus alligavit domum ingrediens, vasa eius que nos sumus, aliquando Tenebre nunc autem lux in Domino diripiebat.[4]

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2. H.E. V. 23. This does not, as we noted in Chap. IV, prevent Bede from reviving the Gregorian eschatological sanctions in all their force in the ep. to Egbert.

3. C. W. Jones, Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England (1947), 65.

4. Gasquet, ed. Life of St. Gregory by a Monk of Whitby, VI.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREGORIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND
AND
THE IMPERIUM CHRISTIANUM OF CHARLES THE GREAT

It would not be unfair in the light of the preceding chapters to conclude that the Papacy had, in the view of St. Gregory the Great, two functions: the one pastoral, the other evangelical. These functions were informed and given life by the Latin world-view which accepted the reality of the struggles of earthly life and which viewed history as the setting of the battle for salvation in which the individual was to be judged by his adherence to or deviation from God's announced will as that will was interpreted by the Church. Hence the pastoral role of the Papacy was, in Gregory's pontificate, the effort to reform the Church in order to perfect it in righteousness. The idea of the ascetic life became the norm by which righteousness was determined, and the achievement of this end was seen as the highest duty of the members of the ecclesiastical and political hierarchies. Similarly, the evangelistic or missionary role of the Papacy was the effort to bring all men under these same norms of righteousness. The Gospel took with it to foreign parts the cultural outlook of Gregory's Latin Church and its rigorous standard for an earned righteousness.

This urgent view of the role of the Church was not, however, maintained in much of the Church after Gregory's death. The great Pope's reforms had no influence upon the surviving Imperial

institutions of the Mediterranean Church; the Papacy itself deteri-
orated in the following period. Only in England were the ideas of
a reforming Church which was directed from Rome and of an evan-
gelical movement sparked by the Pope kept alive into the eighth
century.

It is generally recognized that it was the English mission
of Gregory which was able to bring about the great movements of
the eighth century and which resulted in the evangelization of
the Germans and the Scandanavians, the revival and reform of
the Church in Carolingian Gaul, and the return of the Papacy to
a role of importance in European affairs. Since most historians
have dealt with either the Gregorian-Saxon phase of the event
or with the Saxon-Carolingian, however, few have seen the extent
of the Gregorian continuum and, hence, the real character of
the revolution which occurred in the life of the Church. It can
be shown that the period, c.590-c.814, saw a struggle which at
length resulted in the triumph of the spirit of Latin Christian-
ity, and that Gregory the Great was the person ultimately respon-
sible for that triumph. An investigation of the mission and
reforms of Boniface and of the development of a Catholic Empire
by Alcuin and Charlemagne should show the vital role played by
the concepts which had been transmitted from the Church of the
Western Roman Empire by Gregory the Great.

Allusion has already been made to the decadence of the
Merovingian Church in the sixth and seventh centuries. That

Gaul which, during the fifth century, had been the strongest
remnant of Roman culture deteriorated rapidly after the invasion
of the Franks.[1] While it remains true that the Franks assimi-
lated and continued important elements of Latin culture—a fact
which paved the way for final and more complete adoption of
Latin ways—and that their cultural life was thus put on a far
higher level, it is as true that the meeting with the Franks
resulted in an important decline in the level of culture among
the Latin remnant.[2] The general decadence of the Church can be
deduced from a mere catalogue of its characteristics in the
period. The Church was nationally organized: its councils were
limited in membership to bishops from the kingdom or sub-kingdom
where they met, and the Merovingian house controlled the appoint-
ment of its leaders.[3] The synods were completely abandoned

1. Nothing demonstrates this so clearly, I think, as a com-
parison of the writings of, say, Apollinaris Sidonius (c.432-c.
480) with those of Gregory of Tours (c.540-594). The decline is
appalling. See S. Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the
Western Empire (1958) and his Roman Society in Gaul in the Mero-
vingian Age (1926).

2. The most interesting recent re-examination of Merovingian
culture is the historical-archeological study of E. Salin: La
Civilisation Mérovingienne (1950-1959). Salin feels that one
reason for continuation of some Latin elements was contact through
trade with the rest of the Empire which brought about great mod-
ifications in Frankish art, liturgics and general culture (See I.
204). Despite whatever modifications occurred, he concludes,
"c'est la Romania qui lui donnera l'essential de son charactère."
(IV, 47)).

3. W. Levison, England and the Continent in the Eighth Cen-
tury (1946), 46; L. Bréhier & R. Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, les
États barbares, et la Conquête arabe (1938), 368-372.

between 696--if not earlier--and 742, and the metropolitan office disappeared.[4] After Gregory of Tours and Fortunatus, except for a few saints' lives and some inconsequential verse, no literature of any significance was produced. The Latin of the Merovingian court further testifies to the marked decline of learning in a church and region which had once been a center of Latin letters.[5] The Merovingian Church had almost no missionary zeal; the one significant missionary, St. Amandus (d.c.676), had, interestingly and symptomatically, a great sense of devotion to the Roman See and (perhaps) some connections with the English.[6] The ascendency of the Mayors of the Palace had--until the meeting of the Carolingians with English churchmen--no effect on the constitution of the Merovingian Church.

It is against such a background that we must set the work of the Carolingian missionaries and reformers. They met a purposeless monarchy which controlled a Church without direction, and they sought the assistance of that state in the conversion of barbarian peoples related to and not unlike the Saxons converted by Gregory's monks.

Attention is often drawn to the Celtic characteristics of

4. Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 370-374; Levison, England and the Continent, 47.

5. Levison, England and the Continent, 47; Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 377-388.

6. Levison, England and the Continent, 48.

the work of St. Boniface on the Continent, but his work is rarely compared for likenesses of spirit and of letter with that of Gregory the Great. It is true that, since he was educated in an English monastery a century after the mission of St. Augustine, there are elements in the work of Boniface which show new influences or a mitigation of the Gregorian spirit,[7] but on the whole the work of Boniface is strikingly loyal to the Gregorian tradition of the English Church.

That the Church was still very conscious of the authority of St. Gregory is evident from the corpus of Boniface's letters. He was concerned to procure for himself and for the English Church authentic copies of Gregory's correspondence from Rome.[8] He questioned the authenticity of Gregory's Responsiones (Epp. XI. 56a)[9]--a question which implies knowledge of both the style and the content of Gregory's letters. Finally, in a rebuke to King Ethelbald of Mercia, he recalled the Gregorian mission as marking the initiation of a period of ecclesiastical and royal righteousness in England.[1] But it is more important that St.

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7. The most striking of these is, it seems to me, the pedantic atmosphere of later Anglo-Saxon monasticism with its interest in letters and grammar, its legalism, and its desire to create an atmosphere of cultured latinism.

8. Boniface, Epp. 54, 75.

9. Boniface, Epp. 33. See Chap. V, above, and M. Deansley & P. Grosjean, "The Canterbury Edition of the Answers of Pope Gregory I to St. Augustine," Journal of Ecclesiastical History, X, 1-49.

1. Boniface, Epp. 73.

Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans, had at the core of his
being the same Latin spirit which had governed the work of his
predecessor. The question of his direct literary dependence
upon Gregory aside, his evangelical, monastic and reform work
was built upon a decidedly Gregorian framework.[2]

The missionary work of St. Boniface fits almost perfectly
into the archetypal pattern set in England for Western evan-
gelistic endeavor.[3] One of its most striking characteristics,
implied by the fact of the Papal initiative in the English work,
is an absolute formal dependence upon the support of the Roman
pontiff. While Boniface, as Wilfrid and his successors, took
the initiative in undertaking the conversion of the heathen, he
also sought, received and relied on Papal endorsement of his
efforts. Although he went independently to Frisia in 716, his
work was frustrated by the hostility of Radbod and he was forced
to return to England.[4] When he resolved, rather than remain in
England as abbot, to return to his mission, he went first to
Rome to seek a papal endorsement of his plans.[5] Throughout his

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2. Suso Brechter ("Das Apostolat des Heilegen Bonifatius
und Gregors des Grossen Missioninstruktionen für England," Sankt
Bonifatius /Festschrift, 1954/, 33) feels that Boniface did not
know the letters of instruction to Augustine, but that he was,
nevertheless, "ein getreuer Vollstrecker der dynamischen Mission-
gedanken Papst Gregors des Grossen."

3. See Chap. V, above, and R. E. Sullivan "Early Medieval
Missionary Activity", Church History, XXIII. 17-35.

4. Willibaldo, Vita S. Bonifacii, IV. (P.L. LXXXIX. 603-
634).

5. Willibaldo, Vita S. Bonifacii, V; Boniface, Epp. 11.
Boniface was supplied letters of introduction by Daniel, Bishop
of Winchester.

life Boniface returned or wrote again and again to Rome to obtain approval of his evangelistic schemes.[6] Although the four Popes with whom he was associated[7] tried in their correspondence to give the impression that they had taken the initiative in the sending of Boniface, it is quite obvious from the _Life_ by Willibald and from the letters that in almost every instance the missionary himself had sought the commission granted.[8]

The reasons for this fiction of Papal initiative are to be found in Boniface's background. Rome was the source of English Christianity as he knew it, and conversion of other pagan peoples had necessarily to be achieved under the direction of Rome. Rome was the center of catholic unity and faith; true Christians must be truly obedient to the successors of Peter.[9] The hymn of the Christian was a prayer for the welfare of the Church under the rule of the Apostolic See:

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6. Boniface, _Epp._ 12, 16-18, 20, 21, 28, 42-45, 108.

7. Gregory II, Gregory III, Zacharias, Stephen II.

8. The first commission serves as an example. Gregory II is obviously only giving sanction to what Boniface had independently proposed: "Exigit manifestata nobis religiosi propositi tui pie in Christo flagrantis intentio, et approbata sincerissimae fidei tua prolata relatio, ut ad dispensationem verbi divini, cujus per gratiam Dei curam gerimus te comministro utamur." (Boniface, _Epp._ 12.)

9. This spirit is to be found throughout the letters. In the first letter to Zacharias, for instance, he asserts that he will continue in fidelity to Petrine authority: ". . . catholicam fidem et unitatem Romanae Ecclesiae servando. Et quantoscunque audientes vel discipulos in ista legatione mihi Deus donaverit, ad obedientiam apostolicae sedis invitare et inclinare non cesso." (Boniface, _Epp._ 50.)

Te Deus altithronus sancta conservet in aede
Sedis apostolicae rectorem, tempora longa,
Melliflua gratum populis doctrina per orbem
Perficiatque Deo dignum pia gratia Christi.
Splendida percipiat florens sua gaudia mater,
Atque domus Domini laetetur prole fecunda.[1]

We have noted already[2] that, beside the crucial factor of Papal origin, the mission of Augustine of Canterbury, was marked by its spontaneity, its monastic attachments, its cooperation with the monarchy, and its willingness to mitigate doctrine in order to make its apologetic more immediately appealing to the pagans. These same factors inhere in the Bonifatian apostolate. By spontaneity, to take the first of these characteristics, I mean the fact that the mission was undertaken with little or no advance planning and without regard to the hierarchical considerations which were strictly enforced elsewhere. Some historians are bothered by the fact that Boniface was, for some years, a metropolitan without metropolitan see, but Boniface and the Popes were unconcerned with this deficiency. He was a missionary legate of Rome. He was to convert pagans and then to move on and convert more: "Nec enim habebis licentian, frater," wrote Gregory III, "pro jure coepti laboris in uno morari loco."[4] Although Boniface and his sponsors were conderned, as a second

1. Boniface, Epp. 50.

2. Chap. V.

3. See Levison, England and the Continent, 72f.

4. Boniface, Epp. 45. Boniface more than once justified his desire to move on by reference to this precept.

step, with establishment of the hierarchy,[5] they were at first only concerned with preaching the Gospel and converting the Germanic peoples. Thus they could occasionally disregard catholic and canonical order in the first instance in order to preach the bases of that order.

As in the case of Gregory's missionaries, Boniface's background was monastic, and an integral part of his conception of his work was the establishment of monastic institutions which should continue and complete the work he had begun. Boniface kept close contact with ascetics in England and on the continent and was especially concerned with the scholarly aspects of the monastic work.[6] He was loyal to the _Rule of St. Benedict_ which he knew as the Rule peculiarly related to Rome,[7] and he sought a papal charter for his great house at Fulda.[8] Most important, he felt that same tension which Gregory had felt between the peace and seclusion of the monastery and the call of evangelical duty in the world under the Roman See. His desire to retire to Fulda--"locus silvaticus in eremo vastissimae solitudinis, in medio nationum praedicationis nostrae"--for a respite from labor before his death is explained to Zacharias in a paragraph in

5. See Boniface, _Epp._ 44, 50, 57, 58, etc.

6. Boniface, _Epp._ 13, 14, 49, 86, 87, 96, 106.

7. Boniface, _Epp._ 56, 86.

8. Boniface, _Epp._ 89.

which he also pledges to work to the day of his death to support
the Catholic Church.[9] That, after this, he died a martyr is
further testimony to his involvement in the characteristic Latin
monastic tension between duty in the Church and in the world and
desire to seek perfection in the ascetic life.

Boniface realized that, without Carolingian assistance, he
could not proceed to convert the heathen nations. His first
efforts in Frisia had been thwarted by the hostile Duke Radbod,
so he waited to return to that nation until Radbod had died and
the Carolingians had renewed their conquest.[1] He brought commen-
dations to the Carolingians and their nobles from the Popes,[2]
and took with him to the pagans letters from the Franks.[3]

Finally, Boniface undertook to preach to the heathen with
that same moderation Gregory I had commended to Augustine.
Although we have no specific notice from Boniface as to his tac-
tics, there is a letter of advice from Daniel of Winchester
which is highly instructive. The heathen were to be shown the
inferiority of their anthropomorphic deities to the one great
creator God of the Christians. They were to be asked why, if
the idols were truly the gods of the germanic peoples, the people
of Christ were prospering and expanding; the world was once

9. Boniface, Epp. 86.

1. Bréhier & Aigrain, Grégoire le Grand, 53; Willibaldo,
Vita S. Bonifacii, VI. 16-17.

2. Boniface, Epp. 19-21, 25, 42-43, etc.

3. Boniface, Epp. 22.

entirely pagan, but now it was increasingly enlightened and reconciled to God. All this was to be said with moderation; the preacher should argue calmly and quietly the case of Christ so as to show to the pagan the foolishness of his old faith.[4] The incident of the oak of Geismar[5] perhaps epitomizes the employment of this latter instruction.

There is, then, a striking formal similarity between the missions of Saints Boniface and Gregory I. More important, however, is the fact that their dynamic is the same. Although Boniface is not so eloquent as his predecessor, there is behind his letters and his activity the same kind of drive and the same feeling of urgency. Dread necessity compels him to seek perfection and to preach perfection.[6] A speech given Boniface by Willibald recalls his successors' impression of their Bonifatian legacy: they were to continue and complete his work by consolidating the missionary advances and organizational gains, and their sanction for so doing was eschatological.[7]

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4. Boniface, Epp. 23.

5. Willibaldo, Vita S. Bonifacii, VIII. 22.

6. Boniface, Epp. 78.

7. Willibaldo, Vita S. Bonifacii, XI. 33. It is interesting to note the occurrence of some of the Gregorian eschatological images in the correspondence addressed to Boniface (see Epp. 13, 14). While these do not necessarily derive directly from Gregory, they testify to the survival of something of the same sense of urgency in the face of Judgment. Although such notices in the literature tend to be formal and not so urgent as in Gregory's work, they indicate the survival of an eschatological undergirding for Carolingian theology and polity.

The same kind of thing is to be noticed in the efforts of
Boniface in the name of the Popes to reform the Church within
the Merovingian-Carolingian establishment. The turning point
in the national life of the Franks--the transition from a semi-
barbarous existence with no cohesion and less direction to a
more Christian state with vision and purpose--cannot be under-
stood without reference to Boniface. There is a luminous passage
in Willibald's Vita S. Bonifacii[8] in which the death of Charles
and the beginning of cooperation between Boniface and his sons,
Pepin and Carloman, is recounted. The reader is meant to know
that from this moment dates that unprecedented alliance of Franks
and Popes which was to be the driving force behind the achieve-
ment of the Carolingians.

While this is not the time to consider the development of
this alliance in detail, it is important to consider several of
its features. The most important external result of the new
Franco-papal relationship was, of course, the final ouster of
the nominal kings--the last Merovingians--with the acquiescence
of the Papacy. While Boniface himself did not, if our records
are complete, intercede in this affair until he was directed by
Rome to anoint the new king, the very fact that the question of

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8. "Cumque Caroli ducis gloriosi temporale finitum esset
regnum, et filiorum ejus Carlomanni et Pippini robatorum esset
imperium, tunc quippe Domino Deo opitulante ac suggerente sancto
Bonifacio archiepiscopo, religionis Christianae confirmatum est
testamentum, et orthodoxorum Patrum synodalia sunt in Francia
correcta instituta, cunctaque canonum auctoritate emendata et
expiata . . ." (Willibaldo, Vita S. Bonifacii. IX. 29.)

the Carolingian _coup_ _d'état_ was approved after petition to Rome
is unthinkable without reference to Boniface and the other
English missionaries whose work had re-opened communication
between the Franks and Rome and given the first substance to
idea of Papal authority among the Franks. Two things should be
noted in the form taken by the actual ceremonies of investiture.
First, the act was sanctioned both by a convocation of Franks
who elected Pepin the Short and by the Pope whose legate anointed
him king. Second, the unprecedented act of anointment, later
repeated by Stephen II, was doubtless intended to recall that
concept of secular ruler as a successor of David and a minister
of God's will which had been so appealing throughout the period
of the Latin Christian Empire.[9] These two elements are indica-
tive of the whole course to be taken by the Carolingian Empire.
It was popular and ecclesiastical in its constitution, and it
was to serve as a ministry of the Catholic Church--as an arm of
the reform which received its direction from the bishops of Rome.
Any question of the Church _vis_ _à_ _vis_ the State would be, as it
had been to St. Gregory, artificial: the state existed to achieve
the ends of the Christian faith.[1]

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9. See E. S. Duckett, _Anglo-Saxon_ _Saints_ _and_ _Scholars_ (1947),
440f; Bréhier and Aigrain, _Grégoire_ _le_ _Grand_, 363f; Levison,
England _and_ _the_ _Continent_, 115ff.

1. So Carloman, publishing the decrees of the first synod,
says that he met with bishops, priests and nobles ('optimatum
meorum'), "ut mihi consilium dedissent, quomodo lex Dei, et
ecclesiastica religio recuperetur, quae in diebus praeteritorum

The reforming alliance established between Carloman, Pepin and Boniface was concerned in the first instance to restore the annual synods of the Frankish Church and to revive the metropolitan jurisdictions. Boniface sought and received from Zacharias permission for the Carolingians to convoke reforming synods,[2] and he arranged for the restoration of the pallium in the Frankish domain.[3] The canons of the first synods, although they represent simply Boniface's program for the restoration of the Church in the face of its present condition, read like the program of the Gregorian Papacy: the legate of Peter is recognized, annual councils are declared necessary, Church funds and properties are--with reservations--to be restored, clerical life is to be regularized and diocesan control strengthened, paganism is to be rooted out, the marriage canons enforced, and the monasteries are to be reformed according to the precepts of the Regula S. Benedicti.[4] These, together with the frequent references of Boniface to canon law of the Roman tradition as a vital constituent of catholicity, account in large measure for the conservatism and reliance upon ecclesiastical precedent which

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principum dissipata corruit, et qualiter populus Christianus ad salutem animae pervenire possit, et per falsos sacerdotes deceptus non pereat." (Boniface, Epp. 56.)

2. Boniface, Epp. 50.

3. Boniface, Epp. 57, 58.

4. Boniface, Epp. 56.

was to mark the Carolingian Church.[5] The continued reliance of
this reform on the sanction of the Papacy is most dramatically--
though it is hardly the only case--to be seen in the referral of
the case of the heretics Adelbert and Clemens to Rome. The
example of a Papal condemnation was evidently though a desirable
and adequate symbol of the authenticity of the reform movement.[6]

More significant, perhaps, than Boniface's platform of
reform was his zeal for reform. He was so concerned for the
establishment of righteousness in the Church that he could not
desist from counselling anyone he thought remiss. Rome was
reminded that as she was not pure the Franks and the pagans
would either be scandalized or would persist in their evil ways.[7]
Boniface was forever writing to his own English Church to urge

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5. See, for example, Boniface, Epp. 50 in which Boniface
pledges to Zacharias that he will attempt to be worthy "vestrae
pietatis servi obedientes subditi sub jure canonico." The con-
cept of a fixed body of canon law, which seems to me to have been
peculiarly English, was not a part of the formal oath of obedi-
ence to Gregory II (Boniface, Epp. 16). The English, seem to
have associated the Responsiones of Gregory and the penitential
of Theodore at an early stage (see Deansley & Grosjean, "The
Canterbury Edition of the Answers of the Pope Gregory I to St.
Augustine; Journal of Ecclesiastical History. X. 1-49). Thus a
legalism and a penitential system both of which seem--although
neither is in fact--to be consonant with Gregory's Epp. were
transmitted to the English and Frankish tradition. Caught up
with the zeal of the Carolingians to imitate the 'papal' and the
Roman Imperial legal traditions, they were to become integral
parts of the ecclesiastical system.
   The scrupulous, sometimes almost pathetic, fidelity of Boni-
face to the legal tradition--especially with regard to marriage
and to his relations with profligate clergy--is evident through-
out his Epp.

6. Boniface, Epp. 59, 77.

7. Boniface, Epp. 50, 51.

internal reforms where there was laxity and to argue for adherence to the general program he had instituted among the Franks.[8] He lamented as a true son of Gregory I, though without the same pitch of urgency, the tedium and the hardship of living in an evil age among evil men.[9]

When one takes into account the state of the Merovingian Church at the beginning of the eighth century, one can see the vital role played by Boniface in the institution of the Carolingian reform. A nation and a church with little purpose was given a _raison d'être_ upon which a strong Empire could one day be built. This sense of purpose owed little or nothing to the Merovingian period. It owed its desire to evangelize, its new relationship to the Papacy, its concept of a purified Church and a ministerial royality, its Romano-legalistic organization--indeed, the whole of its organizing principle--to the successors of those Englishmen whom Gregory had sent to England to establish a pure Church outside the old order. When the logical followers of Gregory on the Continent had utterly lost the Latin spirit of duty and action, the English remnant were able to return and to revive not only the Franks but also the Papacy itself. Their success--which is largely the success of Boniface--depended upon their devotion to the Church as a body spread and continually renewed in purity under the direction of the successors of Peter.

This spirit, with some significant modifications, controlled the work for the revival of a Christian Empire of Charlemagne.

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8. Boniface, _Epp._ 73, 74, 75, 78, 91.

9. Boniface, _Epp._ 63, 85.

The general facts concerning the work of Charlemagne are well enough known to obviate the necessity of an historical review here. I mean, simply, to discuss several aspects of his work and its theological expression in the writings of Alcuin in order to demonstrate that the Carolingian renaissance was essentially a continuation of the work of St. Boniface and the ancestors of Charles, and that it amounted to a revival of the spirit of Latin Christianity as mediated by St. Gregory the Great.

It is commonplace to see in this Imperial revival an imitation of the form and dynamic of Byzantine Rome.[1] While it is true that, especially in some of its architectural manifestations and in its concept of the supremacy of the Emperor, the Carolingian work relied on the example of Byzantium, it is more important that it wrought significant changes which were of the Western or Latin type.

Carolingian political theory was, for instance, dependent upon the Platonic cosmology of the East both as it had been adopted by earlier Latin theologians and as it understood contemporary Byzantine practice:

> The conception of the Cosmos as an orderly system
> and of the earth as a mirror of the heaven was the
> foundation of all political thinking. The cosmic
> harmony appeared to be divided into several spheres.
> According to the plan of creation the human sphere
> had been established parallel to the divine sphere.
> Although this parallelism had been destroyed by

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1. See C. Dawson, _The Making of Europe_ (1939), Chap. XII. This is also the implication throughout H. Fichtenau, _The Carolingian Empire_ (1957).

original sin, its rough outlines were still discern-
ible. Though the multiplicity of faiths and of
political constitutions showed the extent to which
this parallelism had actually been destroyed people
remained quite certain that one God, 'the highest
and true Emperor', was the model and source of all
political power.[2]

Whereas the Eastern Emperors were satisfied to rule as types

of the divine with more emphasis on the privileges than on the

duties of such a status, however, the new Christian Emperor of

the West felt himself to be under heavy obligation to further

the purposes of God for that area of the Cosmos over which he

ruled by the grace of God. The formal Platonic structure of

Carolingian thought and its Latin transformation are nowhere so

clearly seen as in the conclusion of Alcuin's _Disputatio de_

Rhetorica _et_ _de_ _Virtutibus_. While on the surface this is a work

on classical rhetoric, it is actually a discussion between

scholar and king on the nature of kingship and the role of law

in the lives of men.[3] The student is meant, while learning the

rhetorical discipline, to be inculcated with the prevailing notions

of law and the social order. This is evident when at the con-

clusion, the discussion shifts from the Christian virtues to the

order of the soul:

Ut diligat quod superius est, id est Deum, et regat
quod inferius est, id est corpus, et socias animas
dilictione nutriat et foveat; his enim sacrificiis

2. Fichtenau, _The_ _Carolingian_ _Empire_, 47.

3. L. Wallach, _Alcuin_ _and_ _Charlemagne_ (1959), Part One.
Wallach's thesis is over-stated and has, accordingly, been
moderated here.

purgata atque exonerata anima ab hac laboriosa vita
et aerumnosa revolabit ad quietem et intrabit in
gaudium domini sui.[4]

The love of God enables the soul to subdue the body, not to
escape it, and to assist others in so doing. Then the loving
soul can attain to communion with its Lord. Charlemagne naively
assumes that Alcuin speaks of some great man, and Alcuin replies
that he speaks of the king and of his destiny. He concludes
that their words have proceeded from a discussion of the civil
and legal realms to the internal and changeless forms.[5] Thus,
while the cosmological bases of the Imperium of Charles are
rooted in the conventional Platonism of Christian theology, they
are Latinized. The historical order under its king is to prac-
tice the virtues in order to achieve righteousness and is, thus,
to bring the historical under the standard of the eternal. The
significance of this basic alteration of Byzantine political
theology and the fact that it represents a totally different
attitude to human existence is seen when one recognizes the
Gregorian atmosphere of the program of Charlemagne.

The duty of the king to live and work righteously in the
historical realm is apparent in the attitude of Charles and his
theologians toward kingship, law, the Church and the Papacy,
and toward the traditional sanctions for such effort. All the

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4. Alcuin, de Rhetorica et de Virtutibus, 47. (W. S. Howell,
The Rhetoric of Alcuin & Charlemagne /1941/).

5. "Sermo iste noster, qui de volubili civilium quaestionum
ingenio initium habuit, hunc aeternae stabilitatis habeat finem
...." Ibid.

phases of kingship come under the rule of God. Whether the king is undertaking a war, reforming the civil and ecclesiastical life of his subjects, or defending the true faith, he is acting because of the God he confesses as his Lord.[6] The king both wields the sword of power and sounds the trumpet of catholic truth, as did David whose descendent the ruler is. Such a rule brings peace, subdues the pagans and insures purity in all phases of life.[7]

This same spirit of a universality under Christ in the kingship of Charlemagne is displayed by his legislation. Einhard says that Charles codified the oral traditions of the heathen he conquered and supplemented the Merovingian laws after the manner

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6. Alcuin in Epp. 41 urges Charles to uphold orthodox Christology, not being swayed by Adoptionism which tends to divide the divinity, and, thus, the powers. Authority and divinity are unified and not distributed or divisable: "Unum verum Deum et unum Dei filium in duabus naturis, divina scilicet et humana, dominum nostrum Iesum Christum regnantem cum patre et Spiritu sancto paredicamus et confitemur, non divisa potestate nec partita, quasi una sit maior potestas et altera minor; quia divisionem et partitionem vera non recepit aeternitas vel divinitas, quae est in Christo Iesu domino nostro." The implication is clearly that adoptionist Christology would also allow a division of Charles' powers.

7. ". . . et gladium triumphalis potentiae vibrat in dextra et catholicae praedicationis tuba resonat in linqua. Ita et David olim praecedentis populi rex a Deo electus et Deo dilectus et egregia psalmista Israheli victrici gladio undique gentes subiciens, legisque Dei eximius praedicator in populo extitit. Cuius eximinia filiorum nobilitate in salute mundi, de virga flos campi et convallium floruit Christus, qui istis modo temporibus ac eiusdem nominis, virtutis et fidei David regem populo suo concessit rectorem et doctorem. Sub cuius umbra superna quiete populus requiescit christianus, et terribilis undique gentibus extat paganis. Cuius devotio a sectis perversi dogmatis fidem catholicam evangelica soliditate munire non cessat . . ." Alcuin, Epp. 41.

of a true Roman ruler.[8] The very lack of system in the compilation of Carolingian law[9] demonstrates the indivisability of the several elements of the whole Imperial fabric. The general capitulary for the Missi dominici--the royal agents sent out with full authority to represent the king in his territories[1]--contains a statement of the general orientation of lay and clerical life under the Emperor and more specific definitions of the roles of the ecclesiastics, from bishop and abbot to clerk and monk, and of the laity, from count to beggar. The grievances of all are justly to be redressed. The most interesting provision of the statute is the redefinition in Christian terms of the old Germanic oath of fidelity to the Emperor. The oath is not merely one of civil obedience as it had formerly been: it requires as well that every man live the Christian life, that he be just to all men indiscriminately, that he have regard for rights of property, that he pay his service of military duty, that he not impede the commands of the Emperor (as by failure to pay taxes). All this is comprehended in the Imperial oath.[2]

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8. Einhard, Vita Caroli Magni, XXIX.

9. Fichtenau, The Carolingian Empire, 99.

1. Ibid., 107ff.

2. "Haec enim omnia supradicta imperiali sacramento observari debetur." Capitulare Aquisgranense an. 802. § 9. (P.L. XCVII. 225.) The obligation for personal life is as follows: "Primum ut uniusquisque et persona propria se in sancto Dei servitio, secundum Dei praeceptum et secundem sponsionem suam, pleniter conservare studeat secundem intellectum et vires suas; quia ipse domnus imperator non omnibus singulariter necessariam potest exhibere curam et disciplinam." § 3 (P.L. XCVII. 224.) The note of Imperial concern for all subjects, even though

The Empire of Charles was, then, a Christian Empire in more than a superficial way. It existed because of the king's conception of the deity, and in all its ramifications--whatever our judgment as to its interpretation of and the means it used to implement the theology--it was consciously indebted to that theological undergirding.

Many historians have noted that the Papacy was not a necessary concomitant of this Imperium Christianum: Charles usurped for himself in practice many of the functions reserved to the Papacy by, say, Gregory I or Boniface, and at times treated the Pope with contempt.[3] Yet, at the same time, the Carolingian was unable to conceive of his role without the support of the Papacy. The State, he had been taught by his Anglo-Saxon theologian and had learned as a son of Pepin the Short, was an agency of God dedicated to Catholicity as well as to evangelism and to reform. The role of the Pope may have been that of Moses--intercessor for God's people--while that of the King was that of David--warrior and judge--but after all Moses was the custodian and giver of the divine law while David was but the administrator. One did not exist without the other:

Charles can obviously not express that concern for each individual, is especially important.

3. See, for example, the two letters preserved as Alcuin, Epp. 92, 93. Charles in these sounds almost like Gregory I speaking to the Emperor as he exhorts Leo III to follow the will of God for the Church.

Sicut enim cum beatissimo patre praedecessore
vestro, sanctae paternitatis pactum inii, sic cum
beatitudine vestra eiusdem fidei et caritatis
inviolabile foedus statuere desidero; quatenus,
apostolicae sanctitatis vestrae divina gratia
advocata precibus, me ubique apostolica benedictio
consequatur, et sanctissima Romanae ecclesiae
sedes Deo domnante nostra semper devotione defen-
datur. Nostrum est: secundum auxilium divinae pietatis
sanctam undique Christi ecclesiam ab incursu paganorum
et ab infidelium devastatione armis defendere foris,
et intus catholicae fidei agnitione munire. Vestrum
est, sanctissime pater: elevatis ad Deum cum Moyse
manibus nostram adiuvare militam, quatenus vobis
intercedentibus Deo ductore et datore populus
Christianus super inimicos sui sancti nominis ubi-
que semper habeat victoriam, et nomen domini nostri
Iesu Christi toto clarificetur in orbe.[4]

The Pope may well have been reduced to the role of a sacerdotal

and intercessory functionary, but Charles could not justify

the continued existence of his Empire without him. It is prob-

able that the Papacy, after its long period of degeneracy was

not able--even if Charles had elected to subject himself to it--

to assume the reins of Church government. If this was so,

Charlemagne's deference to the Popes assumes an added signifi-

cance: it indicates the depth of the revolution which occurred

in Frankish Church life under Boniface and Pepin. Before those

men the religion of the Franks was a national affair, now the

life of the nation was a Christian affair. This was true not so

much because of a deeper conversion of the Franks as because of

the inculcation of the idea that all political order was part

of the dispensation of God--an idea which was given to the world

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4. Charles in Alcuin, Epp. 93. See also the accompanying
Epp. 94 of Alcuin.

by the Roman church, but lately forgotten by even Peter's successors, and which was only communicated to the Frankish rulers by the spiritual sons of St. Gregory the Great.

The program initiated under this concept was, like that of Boniface, quite similar to that of Gregory the Great. It bore, however, two significant additions: under the Emperor it had a program for military expansion, and, in the effort to educate a class of leaders, it utilized the monasteries primarily as schools.[5] But the zeal for the monastic order, the desire to adopt Roman liturgical uses, the effort to perfect the Church in righteousness, the zeal for orthodoxy, and the continuation of missionary work all reflect an essential debt to the general Gregorian or Latin spirit. Although in practice it was, as we have seen, mitigated, there was as well a general recognition of the duty of the Christian--especially of the bishop--to speak out for reform of order and of life when the occasion presented itself.[6]

As in the case of Boniface, we can detect some literary dependence on Gregory and some acknowledgement of his authoritative position. Perhaps the most impressive of these evidences is the reliance on Gregory's doctrine of images as the concluding and decisive point of the Libri Carolini, prepared by Alcuin for the Council of Frankfort of 794, to refute the position taken

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5. See Charles' Epp. III. (P.L. XCVIII. 895f).

6. Alcuin, Epp. 3, 33, 94, 101, etc.

by the second Council of Nicea. The reliance here on Gregorian precedent is doubly significant since the refutation was intended against the compliance of Rome as well as against the canons of the Council.[7] But, as with Boniface, literary connections are not so important as the spirit reflected by the Carolingian Imperialists.

It is, therefore, most important that all this Latinity and all this intellectual revival was conditioned by an eschatological--as well as the previously discussed ontological--sanction. The vision or fear of a social and universal cataclysm was gone, but behind every unrighteous act stood the shadow of the Judge, who controlled the future of the individual. Righteousness was not sought for its own sake, but for the sake of acquittal on the dread day. To Alcuin, the Viking destruction of Lindisfarne was a judgment on the unrighteousness of Cuthbert's successors and a warning to the rulers of England and the monks of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. The latter, declared Alcuin, must remember their heritage and emulate it in their obedience to the Rule and in their virtuous works lest the same disaster overtake them.[8] Theodulph of Orleans, humanist, satirist,

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7. See Fichtenau, The Carolingian Empire, 60ff, and É. Amann, L'Époque Carolingienne (1941), 120ff. The text of Libri Carolini. IV. 24 (P.L. XCVIII, 1248) reads, "Sciat dominus apostolicus et Pater noster, et cuncta simul Romanorum Ecclesia, ut secundum quod continet epistola beatissimi Gregorii quam ad Serenum Massaliensem episcopum direxit: /quotes Epp. IX. 208/. . . Et quia sensum sanctissimi Gregorii sequi in hac epistola universalem catholicam Ecclesiam Deo placitam indubitanter libere profitemur."

8. Alcuin, Epp. 17-22, 61.

artist though he was, feared the punishment that must await the
sins of his contemporaries:

> Scissus agit paries venturae signa ruinae,
>   Qui invenis solidus pictus et arte stetit.
> Utque senem taedent iam cantica ludicra ludi,
>   Stare, equitare, gradi, verba iocosa loqui;
> Dumque quatit tremulos male creber anhelitus artus,
>   Suspirat, fundit murmura crebra gemens:
> Dulcia sic vetulum liquerunt omnia mundum,
>   Nec manet ullus ei qui fuit ante vigor.
> Dira cupido viget, sordes, periuria, luxus,
>   Livor edax, falsum, iurgia, rixa, dolus.[9]

Henri Pirenne felt that economically, socially, politically
and intellectually, the rule of Charles the Great marked the end
of Roman civilization and the beginning of the middle ages.[1] He
noted, with especial relevance to our consideration here, that
the Romanist revival perpetrated by the Emperor under the guidance
of the Anglo-Saxons, was an artificial renaissance limited to
an elite. While Latin was improved and Roman political institu-
tions were revived, lay learning was finally lost, the language
of the Church and Empire ceased to be a living language, and
Germanic folk art and myth became the forces directing a new
civilization.

But the work of Charles was not so shallow as Pirenne
thought. It was able, after all, to inspire the continued
search under Louis the Pious for the bases of a unified Christian
order despite the fact that the economic decline of the last

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9. Quod multis indiciis finis proximus esse monstretur
(Theodulfi, Carmina, XIV), M.G.H. poet. I. 468-469.

1. Mohammed and Charlemagne (1957), 236ff.

years of Charles made it impossible to keep up the ostentatious facade Charles had built.[2] It was firmly enough rooted to impose its basic political forms, its intellectual presuppositions and its doctrine of a reforming, evangelistic and Papal Church upon the divided Europe which was about to emerge.[3] That is a sufficient achievement for any age. It is even more impressive when its impoverished Merovingian heritage is taken into account.

Nevertheless, we have to recognize that the Carolingian dream was doomed from the beginning. It was dependent upon the titanic strength of one man; its Latin superstructure was top-heavy; the Germanic forces hidden beneath that superstructure were plainly stronger than the Roman forms. Be that as it may, however, the age of Charles was a great moment of Latin Christian zeal to act as individual for the benefit of the whole. That spirit, for which we can see no source but Pope Gregory the Great and his English monks, was able because of its renaissance under Charlemagne to become the compelling, driving, dynamic force which has ever since shaped Western history.

The Germanic peoples had threatened the Empire and ultimately destroyed it. But the adoption of the cultural spirit of the Empire by the Germans was the reason for their victory and the determinant of their subsequent history.

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2. Fichtenau, The Carolingian Empire, 187.

3. H. St. L. B. Moss. The Birth of the Middle Ages (1957), 265; Fichtenau, The Carolingian Empire, 188.

be escaped by retreat from the world, but was defeated by an effort of the will. The role of the state was to engage in this same battle; if the states and their leaders were negligent in their duty to aim for moral perfection in their realms, they were to be censured. There was, in other words, purpose in history, and the destiny of the individual was to devote himself wholeheartedly to the attainment of the divine historic purpose. In the works of the Latin Christian Fathers, despite Augustine's largely unheeded questioning of the essential concept of a Christian Imperium, this old Roman view of the world was adopted by the Church: Christ became the example and Judge of a Christian society, whose goal was the attainment of his Kingdom, and of the Christian individual, whose duty was to devote himself to the historic goal. It is this outlook which I would call the spirit of Latin Christian culture.

The outlook had two effects. First, it alienated the West from the East: the Eastern Church, although it was invariably the source for the forms of Latin thought, tended to a far more static view of society because of its belief that the physical and the historical were despicable because passionate and that the goal of the individual was to seek to release his soul from the body to find communion with God, the Absolute. Second, the Latin spirit, which tended already to give the West a sense of cohesion as a unit in juxtaposition to the East, could potentially be mobilized to unify the Western world.

It was the struggle of the spirit of Latin Christian culture to survive, to convert barbarian purposelessness, and to over-come the encroachments of the Greek cultural spirit which charac-terized the intellectual and religious life of the period from Gregory the Great to Charles the Great.

Gregory was the last great Roman spokesman for the Latin spirit. Although he believed that the individual could most easily win his battle with evil by ascetic retirement--by seeking the calm of the monastic port against the turbulent sea of life in his age--his Latin sense of duty to serve the his-toric destiny of the race by working in the Church in the world forced him to cast aside his seclusion and to apply a rigorous and ascetic standard of righteousness to the Church at large.

Gregory viewed the crisis of the late sixth century as a judgment upon the failure of the Latin spirit and as a portent of the cataclysmic end of history to which the Gospel points. This belief colored much of his writing and heightened the urgency of what he saw as his mission to preach righteousness and to attempt to prepare the Church, the Empire and the in-dividual to face the coming of the Judge. Humility, zeal for the spread of the Gospel, reform of the Church under the direc-tion of the Pope with the assistance of the Emperor and the kings, good works, strict righteousness, encouragement of monas-ticism--these were the salient topics of his forceful preaching.

When one reads the strong and appealing letters of this great Pope, he is led to conclude that Gregory's preaching must

have revived the Church and the Papacy, if only for a moment.
But internal evidence and subsequent history reveal an astounding
failure. In his own time, Gregory was largely unheeded. He had
acquitted himself magnificently of his duty as Pope to preach
reform, but his platform did not meet the political programs of
the statesmen and churchmen of his time, and, given the decadence
of Imperial and of ecclesiastical administration, he was without
power to enforce his reforms. So at the death of Gregory, the
Papacy withdrew and became for a century and a half a pawn of
the Emperor and of the Lombard kings. Insofar as he had any
real effect upon the old Mediterranean world, Gregory was able
only to maintain the crumbling Roman structure against immediate
destruction by the Lombards and eloquently to remind the Church
and the Empire of their duty to act or to be judged.

Despite his immediate failure, however, St. Gregory was
able to assure the survival of the Latin Christian spirit in
two ways. First, although he had no program to propagate any
specific monastic Rule, by virtue of the association of his name
with that of Benedict of Nursia and by virtue of his devotion
to ascetic principles, the influence of Gregory was crucial in
the propagation of 'Benedictine' monasticism during the seventh
and eighth centuries and was decisive in determining the form to
be assumed by Western monasticism. Gregory had used monks in
the age of crisis to carry the Gospel to England; the successors
of the English missionaries remembered Gregory--and, by exten-
sion, the Papacy itself--as the special patron of monasticism.

And the monasticism propagated by these men--although it used the Regula S. Benedicti which required an ordered, stable life of good works in retirement from the world--was unable to ignore the imperative to work in the world when it was necessary to spread the Gospel and to declare the judgments of God upon an unrighteous world.

The decisive factor in the transmission of the Latin spirit by Gregory was, however, the foundation by the missionary monks of a Latin Christian cultural center outside the Empire which was able to imbue the Frankish Mayors of the Palace with the Latin dynamic and to bring about that Franko-Imperial-Papal construct which was to be the last expression of the full Gregorian ideal and which was to transmit the Latin spirit to the new Christian civilization of the Middle Ages. The English Church was, from 610 to about 725, the only remnant imbued with the Latin spirit. In the wake of the reforms and missions carried out by Boniface and Pepin, with the acquiescence of the Papacy, the Carolingian Empire emerged and sought to revive Roman civilization in the West. When it fell after the death of Louis the Pious, it left a new civilisation which owed Rome at least its spirit of self-criticism, its obligation to act for the cause of Christian righteousness and its recognition of the Pope as the reformer and extender of the Church.

Professor Pirenne's thesis about the beginning of the Middle

Ages can be tested profitably against the evidence of these chapters concerning the survival of the Latin spirit. Pirenne was primarily an economic and social historian, so his theses are only incidentally--and sometimes clumsily--tested against the evidence of cultural history. His final work, _Mohammed and Charlemagne_, contains two basic conclusions concerning the transition from Roman to Medieval which deserve full quotation:

> 1. The Germanic invasions destroyed neither the Mediterranean unity of the ancient world, nor what may be regarded as the truly essential features of the Roman culture as it still existed in the 5th century, at a time when there was no longer an Emperor in the West.
> Despite the resulting turmoil and destruction, no new principles made their appearance: neither in the economic or social order, nor in the linguistic situation, nor in the existing institutions. What civilization survived was Mediterranean. It was in the regions by the sea that culture was preserved, and it was from them that the innovations of the age proceeded: monasticism, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, the _ars Barbarica_, etc.
> The Orient was the fertilizing factor: Constantinople, the center of the world. In 600 the physiognomy of the world was not different in quality from that which it had revealed in 400.
> 2. The cause of the break with the tradition of antiquity was the rapid and unexpected advance of Islam. The result of this advance was the final separation of East from West, and the end of the Mediterranean unity. Countries like Africa and Spain, which had always been parts of the Western community, gravitated henceforth in the orbit of Baghdad. In these countries another religion made its appearance, and an entirely different culture. The Western Mediterranean, having become a Musulman lake, was no longer the thoroughfare of commerce and of thought which it had always been.
> The West was blockaded and forced to live upon its own resources. For the first time in history the axis of life was shifted northwards from the Mediterranean. The decadence into which the Merovingian monarchy lapsed as a result of this change gave birth to a new dynasty, the Carolingian, whose original home was in the Germanic North.

   With this new dynasty the Pope allied himself,
breaking with the Emperor, who, engrossed in his
struggle against the Musulmans could no longer pro-
tect him. And so the Church allied itself with the
new order of things. In Rome, and in the Empire
which it founded, it had no rival. And its power
was all the greater inasmuch as the State, being
incapable of maintaining its administration,
allowed itself to be absorbed by the feudality,
the inevitable sequel of the economic regression.
All the consequences of this change became
glaringly apparent after Charlemagne. Europe,
dominated by the Church and the feudality, assumed
a new physiognomy, differing slightly in different
regions. The Middle Ages--to retain the traditional
term--were beginning. The transitional phase was
protracted. One may say that it lasted a whole
century--from 650 to 750. It was during this period
of anarchy that the tradition of antiquity disap-
peared, while the new elements came to the surface.
   This development was completed in 800 by the
constitution of the new Empire, which consecrated
the break between the West and the East, inasmuch
as it gave to the West a new Roman Empire--the
manifest proof that it had broken with the old
Empire which continued to exist in Constantinople.[1]

The Pirenne thesis has, with some justification, come under

extensive and heavy criticism.[2] Three things are striking and

disappointing about most of this criticism. First, the revisers

have generally failed to realize that Pirenne's work, which came

as a radical departure from conventional historical writing and

was certain to arouse the ire of the nationalistic historians

of Germany and France, was necessarily--and perhaps sometimes

intentionally--overstated. Pirenne's writing cannot, therefore,

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   1. H. Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne (1957), 284-285.

   2. A sampling of the extensive literature is conveniently
collected in A.F. Havinghurst, ed. The Pirenne Thesis: Analysis,
Criticism and Revision (1958).

be treated as though exposure of any one of its several important errors invalidates the whole.[3] Second, most of the criticism has been undertaken without reference to the cultural history of the period involved. Thus, the most vulnerable area of Pirenne's work has not been examined.[4] Finally, many of Pirenne's critics have as most historians since Gibbon--Pirenne himself not excluded--been searching for a date or an event which marks the point of transition. It should be evident by now that no such moment is to be found.

The period, roughly delimited by the dates 590-814, was a period of transition during which the old order was giving way to the new and during which the new was assimilating certain attributes of the old as a part of the fabric of the emerging civilization. The task of the historian should be, then, not to look for the luminous moment but to analyze the factors of deterioration and of development to discover the character of the new culture and the nature of its indebtedness to the old. When this task has been completed, the question of approximate transitional dates can profitably be reopened.

If one recognizes this principle, and if he approaches the problem with more careful attention to the cultural-historical

3. I get the impression that this is the attitude of W. C. Bark in the first chapter of his otherwise excellent work, Origins of the Medieval World (1960), and of many of the essayists represented in the Havinghurst volume.

4. A. Riising admits this in her article, "The Fate of the Henri Pirenne Theses," reprinted in Havinghurst, ed. The Pirenne Thesis, 106.

background, he can greatly illuminate the discussion of the Pirenne conclusions. It becomes apparent, for example, that the single great carrier of continuity between the Imperial and the Medieval civilizations was the Church. One must, then, ask why and in what way this was so, and one must determine what were the relations of this vessel of continuity with the discontinuity which is to be discerned in politics, geography, economics and sociology.

In order to suggest answers to some of these questions, it will be helpful to restate in the form suggested by Pirenne's conclusions the findings of this paper:

1. The Germanic invasions destroyed neither the Mediterranean unity of the ancient world, nor what may be described as the essential features of Roman culture as it existed in the fifth century. The invasions coincided, however, with the deepening cultural and political schism between East and West which is symbolized by the theological controversies of the two ends of the world and by the inability of the East to maintain its political claims in the West.

Furthermore, despite the deterioration of the Imperial structure in the West, men were unable to realize that civilization could continue without the Empire. Hence the attitude of Augustine to the barbarian invasions and that of Gregory to the impotence of Constantinople and to the possibility of becoming a Lombard bishop. The West remained dependent intellectually and otherwise upon the East because it could not come to terms

with the idea of righteous action in and for a Christian society which did not include the Christian imperial structure.

The innovations of the period in the West were Mediterranean, Latin and ecclesiastical. These innovations--notably, if not exclusively, the expansion of monasticism and the evangelistic movements of St. Gregory--moved most profitably from the center of the old culture to an area which no longer was beholden in idea or in fact to its former connections with the Empire and which could, therefore, accept the notion of a papally oriented national Church.

2. No crisis but a concurrence of events which cumulatively amounted to a crisis precipitated the final dissolution of the structure of the Empire during the eighth century. Among these, in addition to the progressive decline of Merovingian Gaul and of Lombardo-Papal Italy, can be numbered the expansion of Islam which destroyed whatever remained of the Christian Empire in Africa and Spain and tended to contain and to restrict both Constantinople and Gaul;[5] the increased threat of the Lombards to the Papacy in the face of the impotence of Byzantium; the rise of the house of Pepin of Heristal in Gaul; the iconoclastic controversy which alienated the Eastern and Western ecclesiastical hierarchies; the revival of the Latin spirit in Gaul and of Papal prestige under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon churchmen

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5. It can no longer be said that the Musulman expansion had any appreciable effect on Imperial commerce. See the essays by R. S. Lopez and D. C. Dennett, Jr., in Havinghurst, The Pirenne Thesis.

who derived from the monastic-missionary 'innovation' of St. Gregory; and, resulting from the latter element, the emergence of a new Western-Germanic Empire which was in many ways an imitation of the old and which, by its very appearance, symbolically completed the fragmentation of Mediterranean civilization.

Of these elements, all derive in some way from the Imperial period, but only one survived the crisis and was retained in the new civilization: Islam did not remain an overwhelming threat economically or socially; the Lombards were subdued, but at the expense of the last Byzantine political hold on the West; the house of Pepin soon disintegrated; the iconoclastic controversy was settled, although the Eastern and Western Churches have never been truly reconciled; the Carolingian Empire lasted but a few years. Only the Latin cultural spirit and the Roman episcopate survived the wreckage of Roman culture.

We could continue restating Pirenne's propositions concerning the new characteristics of the emergent culture, but it would serve no real purpose here. Enough has been said to indicate that Pirenne's crucial mistakes were, first, to seek an absolute date at which he could say that the last true remnants of Rome passed out of existence, and, second, to ignore the cultural continuity of the West and the role of the Church in securing that continuity.

It is because it demonstrates the necessity of emphasizing the cultural élan of the period that reevaluation of St. Gregory's

work is so profitable. The position of Gregory the Great as the
last Roman is of vital importance in Western history. Although
on his own terms he was a failure because he could not resusci-
tate the dying Empire, his efforts to spread the Gospel and the
ascetic ideal served to keep alive the spirit which forced him
to act. More than simply keeping the Latin spirit alive,
Gregory transmitted the idea of a culture built about a Church
which reformed society and spread its Gospel under the direction
of Rome. It was the imperative of action from the Latin world
view which forced St. Gregory to try to save the Imperial world.
It was his Anglo-Saxon Church which was able to transmit the
Latin spirit emancipated from the dying Imperial structure.

APPENDICES

THE CHURCH'S CHANT AND HYMNODY

Church historians have all too often thought of the history of the liturgy and its music as an ancillary study of only tangential importance. As a result, they have generally failed to consider that by studying liturgical and musicological trends they may be able to deduce important evidence of broader movements and influence in general church history. It is the purpose of this appendix to investigate certain aspects of the history of chant, the liturgy and hymnody in the Gregorian and post-Gregorian periods to see what light can be shed upon our more general theses concerning the Roman primacy and the importance of Gregory's monastic and missionary policies--as opposed to the papal policy, which failed to have immediate effect--for the spread and the durability of the idea of the Roman primacy in the later Church.

GREGORY, "GREGORIAN" CHANT, AND THE LATIN LITURGY

The traditional view of the development of Gregorian chant is well known and need not detain us long here. The view is that St. Ambrose introduced chant in Italy following Eastern models. In Rome, chant was introduced at about the same time, perhaps in the reforms of Damasus and Jerome, which followed the use of the Church at Jerusalem, and certainly by the time of Celestine I (d. 432). Codification of chants of Psalm texts

for the liturgical year and of the Sacramentary was begun by Popes Leo I and Gelasius, respectively. Gregory I is supposed to have reformed Celestine's _schola cantorum_, to have completed the codification of the Sacramentary in its pre-Carolingian form, to have undertaken a general reformation of the liturgy, and to have overseen the composition of the Gregorian chant tunes. Having undergone further minor developments under Gregory's successors--chiefly the introduction of Eastern elements by the Greek and Syro-Byzantine Popes of the seventh century--Gregorian chant and rite were introduced in France under Pepin and Charlemagne. They rapidly displaced the Gallican and Mozarabic rites and, with them, their chants, leaving the Ambrosian chant of Milan as the sole tolerated deviation from the Western norm.

Variants of this view are, of course offered; thus some musicologists have held that the chant melodies were complete by the time of St. Gregory's death, and others that there is no criterion for a judgment on this point, as there is no evidence of a system of notation until considerably later. Gregory's actual musical role varies, according to this body of critics, from that of composer to that of editor or adviser.[1]

Since the eighteenth century, however, serious questions

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1. This is the view in most of the standard musicological reference works; see, for example, the account of H. Angles in A. Hughes, ed., _Early Medieval Music_ (1954), 92ff., or W. H. Frere's article, "Gregorian Music," _Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians_, 5th edn. (1954), _ad loc._

have been raised as to the adequacy of the theory just outlined.
The substitute theses offered have been widely varied: some
have denied all Gregorian activity which cannot be demonstrated
from the extant <u>Corpus</u> of his works, and assert that chant can
be back-dated no further than the datable manuscripts; the more
moderate have merely adjusted the traditional view.[2] The
thesis which is accepted by the present writer is the one
recently offered by Professor Willi Apel, as outlined below.[3]

Byzantine and Latin chant melodies were developed indepen-
dently, but derive from a common source: "the music of the
Churches of Antioch and Jerusalem, which in their turn derived
from the music of the Jews."[4] The role played by Gregory in
the development of the liturgy and the chant is made difficult
to assess by the lack of evidence; Gregory himself hardly ever
mentions music and, rarely, liturgical matters. He did, however,
undertake some reform of the Mass in Rome which is the subject
of a letter to the Bishop of Syracuse in which he answers
Sicilian murmurings <u>de meis dispositionibus</u>.[5] It is likely that

2. Dudden, for example, surveys the problem (<u>Gregory the
Great</u> /1905/, I, 261ff) and takes the former line.

3. <u>Gregorian Chant</u> (1958), and "The Central Problem of
Gregorian Chant", <u>Journal of the American Musicological Society</u>,
IX, 2 (1956), 118ff.

4. Apel, <u>Gregorian Chant</u>, 38. Wellesz holds that there is
classical Greek influence, but this is doubted by Apel, and
flatly denied by Milos M. Velimirovic in his review of Apel's
work, <u>Journal of the American Musicological Society</u>, XI, 2-3
(1958), at 229.

5. Greg. I, <u>Epp</u>. IX, 26.

since the reforms of Damasus and Jerome there had existed a cycle of texts for chants not unlike that of the Church in Jerusalem, as described in the _Perigrinatio Etheriae_, except that in Rome hymns were unknown.[6] The _dispositio_ of Gregory does not, however, appear to have included a sweeping reform of the sacramentary and the chant texts. Nonetheless we can with some assurance assign to St. Gregory a reform of "highly authoritative character" in which the liturgical year and the mass formularies for it were codified, if on no other grounds on the basis of the fact that the later texts retain the Latin of the _Itala_, and not of the Vulgate which became the uncontestedly authoritative translation of the Bible by about 600.[7] What can be said, then, is that the Mass formularies for the liturgical year, especially for the _Temporale_, had by the time of the death of Gregory I become generally fixed after some two hundred years of development. Thereafter when new feasts were introduced the tendency was to borrow from more ancient services. The fixity of the _Temporale_ formulae, says Apel quoting Bishop Frere, "'means antiquity.'"[8]

The same cannot be said about the chant melodies. Gregory's contemporary, Isidore of Seville remarked that unless the tune of a chant was remembered it was lost;[9] no individual or group

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6. Apel, _Greg. Chant_, 47.

7. _Ibid._, 61f.

8. _Ibid._, 82.

9. _Ibid._, 75.

could possibly have memorized the tunes for the vast repertory of the Church year without some system of notation. All that can be said from the evidence is that "Gregorian" melodies are traceable to about 800, when notation first appeared in the manuscript texts; we must, then, think of the melodies as having taken final form between 750 and 850.[1]

We turn now to the question of the final codification of the chant melodies. The bulk of the manuscript materials agree on chant tunes, but there is a group of four manuscripts of the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries which contain different melodies for essentially the same repertory. These manuscripts, called the Old-Roman, were all written in Rome, retain certain archaic features, and do not contain propers for certain of the later feasts of the calendar. Of the extant manuscripts of the standard "Gregorian" repertory, on the other hand, not one was written in Rome, or even in Italy: they are all Frankish or German. This, and a recollection of the eighth and ninth century liturgical interchanges between the Papal See and the Imperial and episcopal courts of the North, leads us to hypothesize that what we call Gregorian chant is in reality Frankish or Carolingian.

This would lead us to the conclusion that "The Old-Roman chant must be considered as the earliest of the preserved repertories of occidential liturgical music and the probable immedi-

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1. <u>Ibid.</u>, 76.

ate source for much of the original nucleus of the Franco-Roman or Gregorian repertory of the late eighth century."[2] There is evidence that, between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, the Old-Roman chant was "the official chant of all Rome, and that it was also used in parts of central Italy and perhaps even in the British Isles before the Norman invasion."[3]

There is also abundant evidence that the "Romanization" of liturgy and chant in the Frankish Empire under Pepin and Charlemagne was an event which occasioned considerable ill-will and confusion. (Any Anglican knows that such reactions are to be expected to efforts at liturgical reform.) Pope Stephen II may have introduced the use of the Roman See during his visit to Pepin, and this use was later adopted at Metz and elsewhere. Charlemagne promoted the cause of the cantus Romanus, but in the ninth century there was a great difference between the uses of the North and of Rome.[4] Roman chant was, in this process of adaptation to Frankish taste transformed; it emerged as the "Gregorian" chant of the Franco-German manuscripts. Finally, according to Jungmann, "About the middle of the tenth century

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2. R. J. Snow, "Old-Roman Chant", in Ibid., 504.

3. Ibid., 484. D. Knowles (The Monastic Order in England /1940/, 547f.) also holds that the English Church retained the pure Roman rite in the seventh and eighth centuries.

4. Hence, the remark of a monk of St. Gall, c. 885, that there was "an exceedingly large difference between our chant and that of Rome," quoted by Apel in Journal of the American Musicological Society, IX, 125.

/and for a period of two hundred years/ the Roman liturgy began
to return in force from Franco-Germanic lands to Italy and to
Rome, but it was a liturgy which meanwhile had undergone radical
changes and a great development. This importation entailed
supplanting the local form of the Roman liturgy by its Galli-
cized version, even at the very center of Christendom."[5]

Some reference to the nature and sources of the Western
Eucharistic liturgies will be helpful at this point before we
draw any conclusion with regard to our general theses. Generally,
we can note the same tendencies at work in the more strictly
liturgical movements. Msgr. Duchesne[6] holds that the non-Roman
Latin rites except the African are local adaptations of the
Milanese rite of Auxentius and Ambrose. The thesis is tenable
but perhaps too simple. The better thesis would seem to be that
of Bishop Frere[7] that the Gothic movement provided the West with
whatever liturgical unanimity it had, but that there was nothing
in the West even approaching the Eastern liturgical settlement.[8]

Spain, where there is evidence of an early dependence on
Carthage, probably at first had an African liturgy. After the
Gothic invasions which brought the rite into line with the

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5. Quoted in Apel, Greg. Chant, 81.

6. Christian Worship (1903), 91, and Chap. III, passim.

7. The Anaphora (1938), Chaps. XII-XIV.

8. Frere is aware of the difference between East and West.
See Ibid., 94.

Gallican, the Spanish rite was reformed by Isidore and Leander
shortly following the conversion of Recared in 587. This was
the Mozarabic liturgy which, through the years of Islamic con-
quest, underwent little change.

The rite in Gaul shows Constantinopolitan rather than Roman
connections. It tended to variability, as also did the Spanish,
and was Catholicized after the conversion of Clovis. The African
liturgy is not extant and is unknown except through remarks of
Augustine and the Carthiginian theologians. It appears to be
nearer the Roman model, but this may simply reflect the
thoroughgoing latinity of the African Church, and may also
indicate that it was a source--since it was doubtless the first
Latin-language liturgy--for the Roman at the time of the discard
of Greek in the old capitol.

The Ambrosian, or Milanese, liturgy seems at first to have
been under the influence of Gaul--or of the same sources as the
Gallican rite--and of the East. Its present form is intermedi-
ate of the Northern and the Roman, indicating the tension under
which Milan and northern Italy labored after the Lombard inva-
sion and the increased need to rely on Rome.

Rome herself was slow in adapting her liturgy to the needs
of Western Christianity; indeed Rome has always been resistant
to ritual elaboration and hesitant to change the form of its
rite. Left in the fourth century a solitary "Greek island in a
sea of Latin liturgies," she had to come around in order to save
her prestige. The result was a compromise liturgy with a fixed

canon after the Hippolitan model and, outside the canon, provision
for variables after the fashion of the Eastern and Gallican rites.
This liturgy assumed its final form about the time of St. Gre-
gory.[9] It is reasonable to assume that this rite is the one
introduced in England by Augustine.

The situation of the West liturgically was almost static—
that is to say, there were no sweeping reforms—from about 600 to
the time of Pepin. The Frankish Empire, now the creative center
of the West, adapted the Roman liturgy at that time to its own
needs; the Roman rite was, so to speak, Gallicanized so that it
was almost unrecognizable. In this, Rome took a definitely
passive role; she only supplied the manuscripts France wanted.
It was the 'Caesaropapism' of the Carolingians, guided by the
theology of Alcuin and encouraged by the English monastics,
which provided the impetus and rationale of the attempt to stan-
dardize the liturgy. Rome continued her old practices until the
eleventh century when—at about the time the Old-Roman chant
gave way to the "Gregorian"—what was by then the almost univer-
sal rite of the West was adopted by the German popes.[1]

The history of liturgy and chant, then, tends to support

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9. _Ibid._, 143, ff.

1. G. Dix, _The Shape of the Liturgy_ (1954), 574-583;
Duchesne, _Christian Worship_, 104ff. Both of these authors have
to adopt this view despite their interest in furthering the case
for Rome's leadership in affairs liturgical.

our general view of the history of the Church during the post-Gregorian period. Before Gregory's time rite and chant in the West developed independent of Roman influence. Indeed Rome--characteristically low church and conservative--was slow in adopting Latin and generally behind the times. Throughout the West in the sixth century, liturgical and musical development reached a general plateau; the rites of Spain, of Gaul, of Rome attained a form which they would retain with only minor modification until the ninth century. In this period the development of musical notation was the only significant change.

It is difficult to say what part Gregory had in the completion of the Latin liturgy of Rome. He may only have happened to be occupant of the See when a form generally satisfactory for several centuries was reached. His interest in chant and liturgy was evidently limited. Further, he was anything but a liturgical imperialist and was willing to admit the validity of local uses--even to adapt his own use where another was obviously superior:

Tamen si quid boni vel ipsa vel altera Ecclesia habet,
ego et minores meos quos ab illicitis prohibeo in bono
imitari paratus sum. Stultus est enim qui in eo se
primum existimat, ut bona quae viderit discere contemnat.[2]

If he tried to bring the West effectively under the Roman primacy, liturgical uniformity was not one of the means he used.

Nonetheless it is ultimately to Gregory that we must accede the primary influence in the Western liturgical settlement. The

2. Epp. IX. 26. See also the letter to Augustine in Bede, H.E. I. 27.

Roman rite went with the Benedictine Order to England. Although it was perhaps altered by Augustine and, later, Theodore, it was doubtless restored to some extent by such men as Wilfrid and the Anglo-Saxon scholars. It was, finally, through the missionaries to Germany and their intense loyalty to Rome that the use of Rome was propagated on the continent. The cause was taken up and completed by the Carolingian monarchs as a tool of their vision of a revived Imperium, a Frankish Rome. What finally came back to Rome was not recognizably the Roman rite; but it did come back purporting to be Gregorian.

The Roman musico-liturgical custom of about 600 was, then, an important determinant of the future of the liturgy and its music, but only in the same curious way that Gregory's voice in other spheres tended to determine the shape of Medieval Catholicism. Gregory "outflanked" the Gallican rite[4] by establishing the Old-Roman use in English Benedictinism; the English ultra-montanists with the Carolingian Imperialists took over his policy; and, finally, the Roman rite "à la française"[5] and the new chant returned to Rome to oust the tenacious, conservative Old-Roman use.

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3. Knowles, The Monastic Order, 547.

4. Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy, 577.

5. Ibid., 583.

ROME AND THE USE OF HYMNS

The history of the use of hymns in the Latin Church to A.D. 1200 has not, so far as I know, been adequately treated. There remain, therefore, several critical problems which I am not equipped to solve. Despite these problems, there is, I think, evidence that hymnody was accepted in the Church in somewhat the same way as were the revised chant and liturgy, except that in the case of hymnody Rome took no part. Indeed, Rome seems to have been antipathetic to the cause for incorporation of hymns in the liturgy. In so far as Gregory may have been opposed to the use of hymns, the case of hymnody is an exception to our general rule which helps to show the validity of our thesis about the movement of influences in the seventh through the eleventh centuries.

The Roman Church, perhaps following the Council of Laodicea in the latter half of the fourth century, remained opposed to the use of hymns in the liturgy and in the Offices until the latter half of the ninth century,[1] or perhaps even the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.[2] In this characteristic display of conservatism, Rome stood alone; all the other Churches allowed hymns to be used at services other than the Eucharist. The Byzantine liturgy had early adopted the use of hymns; they

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1. Duchesne, op. cit., 552.

2. Apel, Greg. Chant, 423; H. Leichtentritt, Music, History and Ideas (1954), 31.

are a part of the Jerusalem rites by the time of the _Perigrinatio Etheriae_.[3] Ambrose had introduced hymnody at Milan and the practice evidently continued there; Hilary of Poitiers, returning from the East, had earlier introduced hymns in Gaul. Spain seems to have been hesitant to adopt hymns--so the council of Braga, 563: "extra psalmos. . . nihil poetice compositum psallatur"-- but the Council of Toledo in 633 had ordered excommunication for those who objected.[4]

It was, without doubt, the monastic movement which popularized the use of hymns by employing them in the Offices and for Processions. Both Caesarius of Arles (d. 542) and his successor Aurelian (d. 551) prescribed hymns for the hours, occasionally even naming the hymns to be sung.[5] The Benedictine _Rule_, as well, mentions hymns, specifying Ambrosian texts for Nocturns, Lauds and Evensong.[6] In view of Roman intransigence on the subject of hymnody and of the importance of the Roman See

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3. But here and in all the texts we must beware lest _hymnus_ is used as a synonym for _psalmus_.

4. Apel, _Greg. Chant_, 422f.

5. W. H. Frere, "Introduction" _Hymns Ancient and Modern_, Hist. Ed. (1909), xiv.

6. _Ibid_. Although most of the critics find in the contemporaneity of Benedict, Caesarius and Aurelian evidence that they speak of the same hymn corpus, I find it hard to believe that Western _Regulae_ of the sixth century followed anything but a general tradition. Communication between Gaul and Italy was not good, and monastic orders in the later sense of a group of houses under centralized control were unknown. Monasticism was, simply, a general movement which captured the imagination of the century and spread widely but without any centralized impetus until Gregory's time. See above, Chap. IV.

in the propagation of Benedictinism, it is difficult to understand the use of hymns in St. Benedict's Regula.[7]

After Ambrose, there arose in Gaul what might almost be called a school of hymnody which must be counted not simply an offshoot of the Ambrosian and Eastern production of hymns but a last spurt of Latin poetic productivity. Prudentius (d. after 405) and Fortunatus (d. after 600) may be said to mark the beginning and the end of the movement. The former's verse was written as poetry during his years of semi-monastic retirement;[8] the latter's hymns were written for liturgical (processional) use at St. Radegund's convent, a foundation which followed the Caesarean Regula ad Virgines. Blume has reconstructed an early monastic hymn cycle[9] which seems to me to represent the use of the pro-

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7. No commentator has, to my knowledge, taken account of this point. I think it distinctly possible that the hymns of Benedict's Regula are late additions to the text following the use of the Gallican and Eastern Regulae. This portion of the text--regarded as one of the several sections which may previously have existed as an independent unit--is marked by vulgarisms usually taken to mark it as the earliest part of the text, but which might as well be late or non-Italian. The matter is, of course, complicated by the fact that probably no Benedictine ms, prior to the Regula Magistri, let alone an autograph, of direct Cassinese provenance had survived. One must, however, still reckon with the fact that the hymn prescriptions are part of all the major textual traditions. If they represent an emmendation of the text,it was early enough to precede the general dissemination of the Rule. (For the textual tradition, see J. McCann, The Rule of St. Benedict /1952/, viiff.) It is interesting to note parenthetically that Benedict and Gregory agree as to the liturgical use of the Alleluia chants.

8. J. Julian, Ed., A Dictionary of Hymnology (1957), ad loc.

9. Reported by Frere, Hymns A&M (1909), xlvf., and Walpole, Early Latin Hymns (1922), xiiff.

ducts of this Gallican school and of the Ambrosian hymns as it was generally accepted in Gaul by the middle of the sixth century.[1]

This cycle gave way to another around the time of the Carolingian reform. Characteristically, the source of the new cycle seems to have been English. The late Bishop of Truro and Dr. Walpole conjecture that the English Church was endowed by Augustine and Gregory with but a meagre hymnal on the lines of the Gallican one described above.[2] There developed a new tradition which is evidenced by Anglo-Celtic manuscripts of the ninth and following centuries. It has in common with the old cycle only four Ambrosian hymns and seems to derive from Irish sources. In this tradition there are some hymns attributed to Gregory I;[3]

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1. Blume et al. take this cycle as Benedictine, but the only evidence for the exact nature of the cycle is the Gallican Regulae. Benedict's only designations are hymnus and ambrosianus. U. Berlière in his article, "Les Hymnes dans le 'Cursus' de S. Benoît", Revue Bénédictine, XXV (1908), 307, sees that it must be questioned whether St. Benedict used this cycle even though it may antedate his Regula. He does not, however, see the crucial contradiction in the Roman and Benedictine practices.

2. They take the 8th century British Museum MS Vespasian A.i. as evidence of this. The Ms contains the Psalter with appended canticles and three hymns (2 Ambrosian: Splendor paternae gloriae & Deus creator omnium; the 3d mentioned by Caesarius: Rex aeternae domine). The Ms purports to be a copy of one brought to England by Gregory's missionaries. None of the commentators have considered the fact that the hymns, even the canticles, could have been added to the Psalter by the 8th century copyist; the position of these items makes me think their inclusion in the original highly unlikely. If the English Church followed the Gallican hymnal, it was probably obtained from the Frankish Church and not from Rome; indeed the Ms Psalter may originally have come from Merovingian Gaul where Gregory is known to have solicited assistance for Augustine (in which case, the fragmentary hymnal might have been appended to the original book). See Frere in Hymns A&M (1909), xv,f., and Walpole, op. cit., xiv.

3. These were supposedly sent by Gregory to St. Columbanus.

and there is evidence of a growing number of hymns for the new feasts of the <u>Sanctorale</u>. Frere hypothesizes that this cycle was introduced in Gaul by the Anglo-Irish missionaries, adopted in the Carolingian reform, and established itself to the exclusion of the old cycle much as did the chant.[4]

Although we must question the nature of the hymn tradition in the Benedictine <u>Regula</u> and seriously doubt the Gregorian origin of the hymn tradition of the British Isles, we can agree, then, with those who follow the Blume hypothesis that the hymnal of the ninth century had its origin in England. There it ousted--or, rather, developed in lieu of--an older hymn tradition which is found in the Gallican monastic <u>Regulae</u>. Finally incorporated in and hallowed by the general Gregorian tradition taken to the continent by the English missionaries and scholars, it became fixed in French and monastic tradition so that it was ultimately able to become part of the general tradition of Western Christianity. Thus, what was in reality anti-Gregorian was able to triumph under the patronage of much that was essentially Gregorian. The strength of the movement of Gregorian-inspired reform in the Medieval Church was, ironically, great enough to secure the establishment of that

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The latter wrote to the Pope, but it is doubted that he received an answer. (Dudden, <u>St</u>. <u>Greg</u>., II, 91ff.; Barmby's note on the Ep. of Columbanus in <u>PNF</u> (2), XIII, 38-9.)

4. Frere's Introduction, <u>Hymns</u> <u>A&M</u> (1909), xviiff; Walpole, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., xv; Berlière, cited article, 370ff.

which was not Gregorian in source.[5]

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5. Somewhat analogous to this--though more a popular than a reform phenomenon--is the spread of the Celtic penitential handbooks. See J. T. McNeill & H. M. Gamer, _Medieval Handbooks of Penance_ (1938), 23-28.

APPENDIX B

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